

# By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them: Ecclesial Fruitfulness as a Standard of Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality, Drawing on the Works of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper

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Boston College

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BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM: ECCLESIAL FRUITFULNESS AS  
A STANDARD OF PROTESTANT AND ANGLICAN ECCLESIALITY, DRAWING  
ON THE WORKS OF JOSEPH RATZINGER AND WALTER KASPER

a dissertation

by

SEAN CHRISTOPHER PAUL

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“BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM: ECCLESIAL FRUITFULNESS AS  
A STANDARD OF PROTESTANT AND ANGLICAN ECCLESIALITY, DRAWING  
ON THE WORKS OF JOSEPH RATZINGER AND WALTER KASPER”

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The thesis of this dissertation is that the ecclesial reality of certain Protestant and Anglican communities cannot be adequately evaluated only in reference to the validity or invalidity of its Eucharist and ministry. The question this dissertation will address is whether recognition of some of these communities as “churches” in the theological sense might be possible using a different standard for understanding “church” and ecclesiality. This dissertation will pursue this question through an exploration of how amenable the writings of Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) and Cardinal Walter Kasper are to developing more adequate criteria for recognizing Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches” in the theological sense. The goal of this dissertation is to advance Catholic ecumenical ecclesiology beyond the current impasse over its inability to attribute the term “church” to those communities traditionally understood to possess an invalid Eucharist and ministry.

This dissertation will draw on the theological works of both Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper in order to develop a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a more adequate standard for understanding “church.” It will suggest that “ecclesial fruitfulness” is theologically rooted primarily in pneumatology. The Spirit is both the inner fruitfulness of God—God as pure, abundant and overflowing love—and also the condition and possibility of God self-communicating this ecstatic love in history. Creation is therefore the outflow of God’s love and a participation in God’s

being. As the world originates in love, so also then is the world ordered towards fulfillment in love. The mystery of God's salvation for humankind is to be drawn up into the fruitfulness of the trinitarian God through a transformation of sinful individuality into an existence of openness and love. This is made possible in Jesus Christ, who is God's self-communicating love in person, God's loving reign, and the meaning of all reality. In Christ's death and resurrection, he becomes fruitful or "communicable" through giving of himself in the Spirit, and this ability to give of himself through the centuries is itself a fruit of the Paschal Mystery. The church, therefore, is to serve as a sign and icon of the Spirit of the risen Christ, who is the fruitfulness of God in and to the world. The "fruitfulness" of the church is thus the Spirit effectively realizing the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist), and through fostering communion among all local churches and ecclesial communities. This dissertation will suggest that a Christian community that is "ecclesially fruitful" in the sense described here is theologically a "church."

TO JACOB AND ELLA

“By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit.”

—*Matthew 7:16-18*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### 1. *Documents of Vatican II*

CD Bishops	<i>Christus Dominus</i> : Decree concerning the Pastoral Office of
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> : Dogmatic Constitution on the Church
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> : Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy
UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> : Decree on Ecumenism

### 2. *Other Abbreviations and Documents*

ARCIC	Anglican - Roman Catholic International Commission
BEM	<i>Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry</i> (1982)
CA	<i>Confessio Augustana</i> (Augsburg Confession)
CBCEWIS Scotland	Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Ireland and
CDF	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith
PCPCU	Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
“Responses”	“Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church.” Instruction of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith (2007)
SPCU	Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity
WA	<i>Dr. Martin Luthers Werke</i> . Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-1993.
WCC	World Council of Churches

## INTRODUCTION

As a fundamental ecclesiological principle, the Catholic Church currently distinguishes between “churches” and “ecclesial communities” using the popular axiom *ubi eucharistia, ibi ecclesia* (“wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, there is the church”). The present inability of the Catholic Church to designate Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches” is grounded on the conviction that they lack valid ministerial orders and, hence, the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery.<sup>1</sup> A document of the Catholic bishops of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, entitled *One Bread One Body*, provides a good example of the reasoning behind the Catholic Church’s inability to recognize these communities as “churches”:

It is essential that the one who presides at the Eucharist be known to be established in a sure sacramental relationship with Christ, the High Priest, through the sacrament of Holy Orders conferred by a bishop in the recognised apostolic succession. The Catholic Church is unable to affirm this of those Christian communities rooted in the Reformation. Nor can we affirm that they have retained the ‘authentic and full reality of the eucharistic mystery.’<sup>2</sup>

The chief argument here is that one cannot be sure of the sacramental relationship that ministers from “Christian communities rooted in the Reformation” have with Christ the High Priest. Because of this uncertainty, the Catholic Church does not believe (or is not

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<sup>1</sup> *Unitatis Redintegratio*, speaking of the separated Christian communities of the West, says: “We believe they have not retained the authentic and full reality of the eucharistic mystery, especially because the sacrament of order is lacking” (UR #22). All quotations from Vatican II are taken from Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. 2 (London: Sheed and Ward/Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland, *One Bread One Body* (London: Catholic Truth Society and Dublin: Veritas Publications, 1998): 28-9. The same reasoning was recently used by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: “According to Catholic doctrine, these Communities [stemming from the Reformation] do not enjoy apostolic succession in the sacrament of Orders, and are, therefore, deprived of a constitutive element of the Church. These ecclesial Communities which, specifically because of the absence of the sacramental priesthood, have not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic Mystery cannot, according to Catholic doctrine, be called ‘Churches’ in the proper sense.” See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” *Origins* 37, no. 9 (July 19, 2007): 134-36.

sure) that these communities have preserved the eucharistic mystery in its fullness. For this reason, therefore, the Catholic Church is unable to affirm that these communities are “churches” in the theological sense.<sup>3</sup>

This negative judgment of the Catholic Church on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities clearly depends upon a series of connected theological propositions. First, the Catholic Church holds that “churches” are only those Christian communities that have preserved the integral and genuine reality of the eucharistic mystery. Second, the retention of the integral and genuine reality of the eucharistic mystery in a Christian community requires a presiding minister who has received valid sacramental orders. Third, valid sacramental orders depend upon whether the ordaining ministers of the Christian community remain within the recognized apostolic succession of bishops. The Catholic Church has employed this reasoning to judge that Protestant and Anglican communities lack the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery using very particular understandings of concepts such as the sacrament of order, apostolic succession, and the meaning of validity; yet many of these traditional understandings have been challenged or enlarged in recent theological scholarship.

For example, the sacrament of order is no longer seen as the bestowal of certain ministerial powers that impress an indelible “mark” or “seal” upon an individual, thereby effecting a change in the person apart from the community. Rather, many theologians now stress the relational and interpersonal aspects of ordination. The emphasis is on the

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<sup>3</sup> The term “churches in the theological sense” indicates those Christian communities that the Catholic Church recognizes as “churches” according to Catholic theological principles. This is in contrast to describing Christian communities as “churches” merely in a sociological sense or because such communities self-identify as “churches.”

sacrament of order placing the ordained into specific relationships within the eucharistic community and with the trinitarian God.<sup>4</sup> The concept of apostolic succession has often been conceived of as a linear pipeline of uninterrupted episcopal ordinations stretching back historically to the apostles. Today, however, scholars propose that apostolic succession is best understood in terms of bishops succeeding the apostles not as individuals but as heads of their communities.<sup>5</sup> These theologians now understand apostolic succession as the succession of the whole college of bishops from the apostolic college.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the meaning of “validity” is itself being rethought. Rather than understanding invalid sacraments in terms of canonical or legal issues, or in terms of the existence or non-existence of certain sacramental realities, invalid sacraments are being considered from the perspective of the church’s understanding of a sacrament and its proper celebration.<sup>7</sup> These ecclesiological developments suggest that it is time to reconsider anew the question of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities using a different standard of “church”; what is needed is a standard of “church” that is theologically broader than the Catholic Church’s traditional emphasis on the validity of a

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000): 72-74; John Zizioulas, *Eucharist, Bishop, Church: The Unity of the Church in the Divine Eucharist and the Bishop during the First Three Centuries*, trans. Elizabeth Theokritoff (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2001): 214-225; Thomas Rausch, “Ministry and Ministries,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003): 64; and Richard Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry within an Ordered Communion,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, 40.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 73 and John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press): 196-7.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 78-9 and John Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now: An Ecumenical Church in a Postmodern World* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004): 246-249.

<sup>7</sup> Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 218-223. See also John A. Gurrieri, “Sacramental Validity: The Origins and Use of a Vocabulary,” *The Jurist* 41 (1981): 21-58 and Charles Wackenheim, “Validité et nullité des sacrements: le problème théologique,” *Revue de droit canonique* 26 (1976) 15-22.



community's Eucharist and ministry as the only sure signs of a community's full ecclesial reality.<sup>8</sup>

The thesis of this dissertation, therefore, is that the ecclesial reality of certain Protestant and Anglican communities<sup>9</sup> cannot be adequately evaluated only in reference to the validity or invalidity of its Eucharist and ministry. Rather, in order to move beyond the Catholic Church's inability to fully recognize Protestant and Anglican communities as "churches" in the theological sense, this dissertation will attempt to develop a standard of "church" centered upon the concept of "ecclesial fruitfulness." In Matthew 7:15-20, Jesus teaches his disciples how to discern the false prophets from true ones. He says, "By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit" (Mt. 7:16-18 NAB). Just as the disciples could know indirectly whether a prophet was from God by observing what the prophet "produced" in word and action, this dissertation will suggest that Protestant and Anglican communities are "churches" in theological sense if the "ecclesial fruit" these communities bring forth demonstrate that they are communities in which the Spirit is effective in realizing the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ (understood as the ongoing transformation of those in the

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<sup>8</sup> "Ecclesial reality" and "ecclesiality" refer to the degree in which the Church of Christ is found to be present in a Christian community. See John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), #11.

<sup>9</sup> In using the term "Protestant and Anglican communities," I mean in particular those non-Catholic western Christian communities who have an advanced ecumenical relationship with the Catholic Church. Particularly, I have in mind those communities mentioned in Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London: Continuum, 2009). Besides the Anglican Communion, these communities include Protestant communities such as the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council, and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. In all of these communities, ecumenical dialogue with the Catholic Church has shown that there is a high degree of convergence in core matters of faith, ministry, and sacramental practice. See Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits*, 27-8, 149-50, 190.

community from lives of egoism to lives characterized by an unselfish love for God and neighbor) through the community's ongoing proclamation of God's Word, its celebration of the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist), and through fostering communion with other churches and ecclesial communities.

This dissertation does not wish to undermine the traditional emphasis on valid orders and Eucharist in the historic apostolic succession as the *normal* way to recognize a Christian community's status as a true "church." Rather, the aim is to deepen and enlarge the Catholic Church's criteria for recognizing "church" in such a way that the Catholic recognition of Protestant and Anglican communities as "churches" becomes theologically possible. This dissertation will pursue this question through an exploration of how amenable the writings of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper are to developing more adequate criteria for recognizing Protestant and Anglican communities as "churches" in the theological sense. Thus, the goal of this dissertation is to advance Catholic ecumenical ecclesiology beyond the current impasse over its inability to attribute the term "church" to those communities traditionally understood to possess an invalid Eucharist and ministry.

The idea of "ecclesial fruitfulness" as an alternative standard for church was inspired by a work of Francis A. Sullivan entitled, *From Apostles to Bishops: the Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (2001). In the last paragraph of his work, Sullivan concludes with some thoughts on those non-Catholic churches that the Catholic Church teaches are lacking fully valid ministry:

I believe we have sound reasons to hold that Christian ministry, in order to be fully valid, must be related to Christ and his apostles through the historic

succession maintained in the college of bishops. At the same time, I believe we have tended to pay too exclusive attention to the conditions for the validity of ministry and have not sufficiently explored the implications of the fruitfulness of a ministry that may not meet all the conditions we believe are required for validity. One implication, which certainly needs deeper exploration, concerns the ecclesial character of communities that have not retained the episcopate, but which for centuries have led numerous Christians to grace and salvation through the effective preaching of the Word of God and a fruitful pastoral ministry. I do not believe we have done full justice to such communities when we simply declare that they are not churches in the proper sense.<sup>10</sup>

Here Sullivan argues that the fruitfulness of Christian community and its ministry is a sign of the ecclesial character of a Christian community. While not suggesting that Protestant and Anglican communities are “churches” in the theological sense, he nevertheless suggests that ecclesial reality is not limited to valid ministry. Rather, the fruits of a Christian ministry should also figure significantly into one’s estimation of the ecclesiality of any Christian community.

To my knowledge, the concept of “ecclesial fruitfulness” does not seem to be treated directly in the theological literature, except by Sullivan. Richard Gaillardetz in, “The Church of Christ and the Churches: Is the Vatican Retreating from Ecumenism?” notes that official church teaching has completely failed to address the “ecclesial vitality” of a Christian community when considering whether such communities are “churches.”<sup>11</sup> Other theologians have also addressed ecclesial reality in terms other than the institutional dimensions of a Christian community’s Eucharist and ministry.<sup>12</sup> Gregory

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<sup>10</sup> Francis A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press, 2001): 236.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Gaillardetz, “The Church of Christ and the Churches: Is the Vatican Retreating from Ecumenism?” *America* 197, no. 5 (August 27th, 2007): 19.

<sup>12</sup> Besides the references below, see also: Luigi Sartori, “‘Subsistit in’ Criterion of ‘Truth and History’ in Interreligious Dialogue,” in *In Many and Diverse Ways, In Honor of Jacques Dupis*, eds. Daniel Kendall

Baum, for example, suggested in 1965 that understanding ecclesial reality in terms of the communion or fellowship between God and the local community that is created by the “conversion of heart which the Spirit produces through Word and sacrament” provides a more fundamental basis for evaluating whether a certain Christian community is “truly and fully Church.”<sup>13</sup> In Baum’s view, if a non-Catholic Christian community listens faithfully to the gospel, shares in the breaking of bread, and otherwise behaves as a living fellowship of Christians, then because of the reality of that living fellowship, this community deserves to be called a “church” in the proper sense of the word, even if we happen to regret the institutional imperfections from which it suffers.<sup>14</sup> Another way to express this way of evaluating the ecclesial reality of a community, according to Baum, is to note that “a Christian community is more truly Church when it is more transformed into God's people, into his family, into a spiritual brotherhood of faith and charity.”<sup>15</sup>

Cardinal Johannes Willebrands also described the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities apart from the validity of its Eucharist and ministry. In a 1987 article, “Vatican II's Ecclesiology of Communion,” he wrote, “Indeed, if the church is fundamentally this communion with the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit, we can see that on the one hand the depth of this communion determines the depth of incorporation in the church....”<sup>16</sup> Reflecting further on this insight, Willebrands suggested that “some

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and Gerardo O’Collins (New York: Orbis Books, 2003): 86-100; Harry McSorley, “Protestant Eucharistic Reality and Lack of Orders,” *Ecumenist* 5 (1966-67): 68-71 and 74-75.

<sup>13</sup> Gregory Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches,” in *The Church and Ecumenism*, Concilium 4 (New York: Paulist Press, 1965): 45.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, “Vatican II's Ecclesiology of Communion,” *Origins* 17, no. 2 (May 28, 1987): 32.

communities may already be of the church without yet being churches (that is, having an authentic eucharist) and without establishing links of horizontal communion with the Catholic Church. Belonging to the church turns essentially on the relation which comes down from God....”<sup>17</sup>

Finally, Luis Bermejo has spoken on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities by suggesting that the Catholic Church has too often proceeded theologically from the validity of ministry to the reality of a Christian community. Rather, Bermejo believes it is also theologically appropriate to move in the opposite direction, from the ecclesial reality of a Christian community to the validity of its ministry.<sup>18</sup> In his book, *Towards Christian Reunion* (1987), Bermejo wrote, “Community and ministry are marked by a simultaneous interdependence, and hence one can legitimately proceed from the reality of the ministry (or its deficiency) to the reality of the Church (or its absence)...; or, contrariwise, one can deduce the reality of the ministry from the previously acknowledged ‘ecclesiality’ of the community....”<sup>19</sup> Bermejo further argued that “the recognition of a truly apostolic ministry and a genuine Eucharist...should come...*after* [these] communities have been recognized as Churches, rather than the other way around.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> This approach has also been suggested by Sullivan: “This clearly means that one can not only begin with a judgment about the ministry in a community and draw conclusions about its ecclesial character; one can also begin with a judgment about its ecclesial character and draw conclusions about its ministry,” *From Apostles to Bishops*, 235.

<sup>19</sup> Luis Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion: Vatican I, Obstacles and Opportunities* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987): 302.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 301. Emphasis original.

In this dissertation I seek to further develop the insights of these theologians. I propose to examine the relatively unexplored area of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church” through a comparative assessment of the ecclesiologies of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper. Given the number of theological issues related to the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities and the amount of literature available, a comparative assessment of two theologians will help limit the scope of the dissertation. Ratzinger and Kasper’s understanding of ecclesiality in general and the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities in particular will be the primary focus of this assessment. This dissertation will judge their respective understandings of ecclesiality according to the following criteria: 1) To what degree are Ratzinger and Kasper’s understanding of ecclesial reality limited by the traditional emphasis on valid ministry and Eucharist? 2) To what degree do Ratzinger and Kasper describe ecclesial reality in terms that complement or transcend the traditional emphasis on valid ministry and Eucharist? The results of this comparative assessment will form the foundation and point of departure for developing an understanding of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.”

Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper have been selected for a couple of reasons. Joseph Ratzinger, former prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), has had a significant influence on the Catholic Church’s official teaching concerning the ecclesiality of non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities.<sup>21</sup> He also has written

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<sup>21</sup> See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Notification on the Book ‘Church: Charism and Power. Essay on militant Ecclesiology’ by Father Leonardo Boff, O.F.M.,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 77 (1985) 756-762; “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion – *Communio in notio*,” *Origins* 22, no. 7 (June 25, 1992): 108-12; “Declaration on the Unicity

extensively on eucharistic ecclesiology.<sup>22</sup> As Pope Benedict XVI, his ecclesiology will surely shape ecumenical relations between the Catholic Church and Protestant and Anglican communities in the years to come. Walter Kasper, the former bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart, served as the President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) from 2001 to 2010. He has also served as a member of the CDF. His ecumenical work in ecclesiology will provide another interesting viewpoint for understanding this topic.<sup>23</sup> These two theologians were also chosen because Kasper and Ratzinger have been known to disagree occasionally on fundamental issues of ecclesiology.<sup>24</sup> Hence, Ratzinger and Kasper have significant ecclesiological differences worth exploring in their understanding of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. Finally, while there have been a handful of dissertations on Ratzinger's

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and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church – *Dominus Iesus*,” *Origins* 30, no. 14 (September 14, 2000): 209-19; “Note on the Expression ‘Sister Churches,’” *Origins* 30, no. 14 (September 14, 2000): 223-24.

<sup>22</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), originally published as *Das Fest des Glaubens: Versuche einer Theologie des Gottesdienstes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1981); *Church, Ecumenism and Politics: New Essays in Ecclesiology*, trans. Robert Nowell and Frideswide Sandeman (New York: Crossroad, 1988), originally published as *Kirche, Ökumene und Politik: neue Versuche zur Ekklesiologie* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1987); *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), originally published as *Zur Gemeinschaft gerufen: Kirche heute verstehen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991); *God is Near Us*, eds. Stefan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), originally published as *Gott ist uns nah: Eucharistie, Mitte des Lebens* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> See Walter Kasper, “Der ekklesiologische Charakter der nichtkatholischen Kirchen,” *Theologische Quartalschrift Tübingen* 145 (1965): 42-62; *Theology and Church*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Crossroad, 1989), originally published as *Theologie und Kirche* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1987); “Das Zweite Vatikanum weiterdenken. Die apostolische Sukzession im Bischofsamt als ökumenisches Problem,” *Kerygma und Dogma* 44 (1998): 207-18; *Leadership in the Church – How the Traditional Roles can Serve the Christian Community Today*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad, 2003); *Sacrament of Unity – The Eucharist and the Church*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad, 2004), originally published as *Sakrament der Einheit. Eucharistie und Kirche* (Freiburg, Basle, Vienna: Herder Verlag, 2004); *That They May All Be One. The Call to Unity* (London-New York: Burns & Oates, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> See Walter Kasper, “Das Verhältnis von Universalkirche und Ortskirche. Freundschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit der Kritik von Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 125 (2000): 795-804; Joseph Ratzinger, “The Local Church and the Universal Church: A Response to Walter Kasper,” *America* 185 (November 19, 2001): 7-1.

eucharistic ecclesiology<sup>25</sup> and one dissertation on Kasper's theological method,<sup>26</sup> there have been to my knowledge no dissertations which have compared Ratzinger and Kasper on a matter of ecclesiology. Nor has any dissertation specifically focused on either Ratzinger or Kasper's understanding of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities.

Exploring the theology of Joseph Ratzinger raises the particular problem of the different positions he has held throughout his life: as a university theologian, as archbishop of Munich, as prefect of the CDF and now pope. It will be important not to confuse or conflate any distinctive features of Ratzinger's theology that may be specific to a particular office held in Ratzinger's overall theological career. Although it is vital to distinguish between what Ratzinger has said as professor, archbishop, cardinal and now pope, it is nevertheless safe to assume that a document of the CDF published under his name would not contain a statement with which the former Prefect disagreed. It is also safe to assume that whatever is written in a papal encyclical of Benedict XVI would likewise express the pope's own personal view.

This same concern also applies to Walter Kasper insofar as he has also held different positions in the Catholic Church throughout his career. Kasper was also a university professor and a bishop. He served as the President of the Pontifical Council

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<sup>25</sup> Rex I. Bland, "Theological Ecumenism in Four Contemporary Catholic Ecclesiologies," Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1997; Mary A. Ehle, "A Trinitarian Ecclesiology of Communion and the Mission of the Church: Beyond the Debate between Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Leonardo Boff; the Contribution of Bernd Jochen Hilberath," Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2002; James Massa, "The Communion Theme in the Writings of Joseph Ratzinger: Unity in the Church and in the World through Sacramental Encounter," Ph.D. diss., 1996.

<sup>26</sup> Patricia Ann Plovovich, "The Theological Method of Walter Kasper," Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1990.



for Promoting Christian Unity from 2001 to 2010. As with Ratzinger, while it is important to distinguish between what Kasper has said as professor, bishop and curial official; it is nevertheless also safe to assume that the documents of his Pontifical Council published during his tenure as president would not contain a statement with which Kasper would personally disagree.

The first chapter of this dissertation will provide the necessary background for this topic through an historical survey of the Catholic Church's pre-conciliar understanding of the ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christian communities. This survey will begin with the Council of Trent and end with the encyclical of Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* (1943). The remainder of Chapter One will describe the significant advances in understanding the ecclesiality of non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities made at the Second Vatican Council. The second chapter will summarize post-conciliar developments in official Catholic teaching on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. It will then describe several developments in post-conciliar Catholic theology that call into question the adequacy of the Catholic Church's teaching on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities.

The third and fourth chapters of this dissertation will consist of a comparative assessment of the ecclesiologies of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper as they bear on the question of the ecclesiality in general and the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities in particular. These chapters will explore in depth the theological and ecclesiological basis for the constitutive role the Eucharist has in understanding ecclesial reality and its relevance to the question of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican

communities. Such an exploration necessarily must address a few key questions, such as: 1) What is the eucharistic mystery in its fullness and why is its preservation in a Christian community essential for it to be “church”? 2) How does the sacrament of order preserve the fullness of the eucharistic mystery in a Christian community? 3) What is the importance of apostolic succession for the preservation of the sacrament of order? and finally, 4) What exactly is lost in those Christian communities that the Catholic Church considers as lacking valid ministry and therefore a valid Eucharist? In approaching these fundamental questions about the eucharistic basis for the ecclesial reality of Protestant and Anglican communities, this dissertation will search for ways of understanding ecclesial reality in categories that might facilitate the development of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.”

The fifth chapter of this dissertation will attempt to synthesize from the comparative assessment of the eucharistic ecclesiologies of Ratzinger and Kasper in chapters three and four an understanding of “ecclesial fruitfulness” that potentially could serve as a more adequate standard for recognizing “church.” Using each theologian’s understanding of ecclesial reality as a foundation and a point of departure, Chapter Five will formulate what “ecclesial fruitfulness” might mean for Catholic ecclesiology and propose how such a concept could be employed as an alternative standard for recognizing a Christian community as a “church” in the theological sense.

Finally, I would like to disclose upfront that the argument this dissertation will make for “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for recognizing Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches” in the theological sense will not be incontrovertible. There

will certainly be theologians who disagree with it. Nor is it likely that the current magisterium would endorse the standard of “church” proposed here. I also recognize that I shall be drawing conclusions from the theologies of Ratzinger and Kasper that neither individual would ultimately agree with. However, the goal of this dissertation is neither agreement with the current magisterium nor theological consistency with either Ratzinger or Kasper. Rather, this dissertation intentionally employs a more exploratory and suggestive style, and is an attempt to seek a creative solution to a difficult ecumenical issue that has thus far proved elusive.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

## *1. The Ecclesiality of Anglican and Protestant Communities Prior to Vatican II*

Before describing the foundational teaching of Vatican II regarding the ecclesial status of Protestant and Anglican communities, it is necessary to review briefly the history of the Catholic Church's ecclesiological self-understanding and its view of Christian communities separated from its communion. Michael Himes, in his essay "The Development of Ecclesiology: Modernity to the Twentieth Century," divides the history of ecclesiology between the Reformation and Vatican II into four periods: the Counter-Reformation (1563-1650), early modernity (1650-1800), the nineteenth century, and the period from Vatican I to Vatican II (1870-1960).<sup>1</sup> Except for the early modern period, for which ecclesiological discussion centered primarily on church polity and church-state issues, each of these periods is significant for the history of our topic.

### *1.1 The Counter-Reformation*

Throughout the Counter-Reformation period, polemical concerns shaped Roman Catholic teaching on the church. Catholic theologians interpreted the Lutheran doctrine of the church to mean that the visible community of baptized persons on earth was not the true church but only a helpful means by which persons might enter into the true church of the justified elect. In response, Catholic theology throughout the Counter-Reformation emphasized the true and only church was not an invisible communion of the elect but rather a visible institution.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Himes, "The Development of Ecclesiology: Modernity to the Twentieth Century," in *The Gift of the Church A Textbook in Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield. O.S.B.*, ed. Peter Phan (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000): 45.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

### 1.1.1 *The Council of Trent*

The Catholic Church was slow to organize an official response to the Reformation. The Council of Trent, which met in twenty-five sessions over the span of eighteen years (1545 to 1563), did not discuss the nature of the church explicitly, even though ecclesiological issues were a central concern in the Reformation.<sup>3</sup> According to Michael Himes, it avoided direct debate on the church because “conciliarism was still very much alive and the popes and the Council wanted to maintain unanimity in the face of the reformers. Since the nature of the Church would involve a full discussion on ecclesiastical authority, ecclesiology was not discussed.”<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless the Council of Trent did have an implicit ecclesiology even if it did not expound one. It assumed a divinely ordained and hierarchical conception of the church,<sup>5</sup> and maintained that the church is “a visible society, hierarchically structured, in which the role of teacher or carrier of tradition is assimilated to that of lawgiver.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the decrees and canons of the Council of Trent assume that the holy Roman church is one and the same thing as the universal church of Christ.<sup>7</sup> The Council repeatedly calls the holy Roman church “the mother and mistress of all churches,” again

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<sup>3</sup> Yves Congar remarks, “Strange fact: this Council which had to give an answer to the Reformation did not deal with the ecclesiological problem.” See, Yves Congar, *L'Eglise de Saint Augustin à l'époque moderne* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1970): 364. Cited in Eric Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image through Twenty Centuries, Volume One: The First Seventeen Centuries* (London: SPCK, 1977): 196.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation: Johann Adam Möhler and the Beginnings of Modern Ecclesiology* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1997): 323-324.

<sup>5</sup> Jay, *The Church*, 196.

<sup>6</sup> Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation*, 323-324.

<sup>7</sup> See canon twenty-nine in the sixth session (the Decree on Justification): “If anyone says that one who has fallen after baptism cannot rise again by the grace of God; or that he can recover the lost justice by faith alone, and without the sacrament of penance as *the holy Roman and universal Church*, taught by Christ and his apostles, has to this day professed, maintained, and taught: let him be anathema.” Emphasis mine. Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2 (London: Sheed and Ward/Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990): 681.

implying that the holy Roman church and the church of Christ are identical. G.R. Evans says:

In the West the See of Rome became synonymous with ‘mother church’ (*mater ecclesia*). This was not necessarily the same as asserting the seniority of Rome.... But the particular local church in Rome in which the primacy was lodged...became conflated in the minds of its Western leaders and people alike with the one catholic and universal body of Christ, and thus with the Church as it stands in a parental relationship to all individual churches.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the documents of the Council of Trent the Reformers as a group are only mentioned occasionally; little is said about them in particular and nothing is said about the nature of their communities. Sometimes they are called “Protestants” or “the Germans of the Confession of Augsburg.”<sup>9</sup> The errors of heretics and schismatics are denounced as “pernicious” and are likened to that of a contagion which needs extermination.<sup>10</sup>

### *1.1.2 The Catechism of the Council of Trent*

After Trent the implementation of the Council’s decrees, including the compilation of a catechism, was entrusted to Pope Pius V. In 1566 he ordered the publication of the Catechism of the Council of Trent. The Catechism, drafted by Charles Borromeo primarily for the edification of clergy, contains an exposition of the Apostles’

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<sup>8</sup> G. R. Evans, *The Church and the Churches: Toward an Ecumenical Ecclesiology* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 87.

<sup>9</sup> “But those from the most noble province of Germany who call themselves Protestants....” In “Decree on postponement the definition of four articles concerning the sacrament of the eucharist, and on the safe-conduct,” Session Thirteen. Tanner, *Decrees*, 701. See also: “which should rightly be approved and commended on the part of the leaders of the Germans of the confession of Augsburg....” In “The safe conduct given to the German Protestants,” Fifteenth Session. Tanner, *Decrees*, 720.

<sup>10</sup> “Desiring to confront their rash opinions, the holy and universal council has decided to root out the more glaring errors and heresies of these schismatics, so that their noxious infection may not spread, and to decree against these heretics and their errors the anathemas that follow.” In “Teaching on the sacrament of marriage,” Twenty-fourth Session. Tanner, *Decrees*, 754.

Creed, the seven sacraments, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.<sup>11</sup> Here the assumed ecclesial self-understanding of the Council of Trent is made even more explicit. It teaches that the church consists of two parts: the church triumphant and the church militant. The church militant is described as the "the society of all the faithful still dwelling on earth,"<sup>12</sup> and is composed of two classes of individuals, the good and the bad, both of whom profess the same faith and receive the same sacraments. The good differ from the bad insofar as the good participate in the spirit of grace and the bond of charity whereas the bad do not.<sup>13</sup>

In a paragraph entitled "Those Who Are Not Members of the Church," heretics and schismatics, along with infidels and excommunicated persons, are considered outside the society of the church.<sup>14</sup> The marks of the church are taught as criteria by which one may distinguish between a true and false church.<sup>15</sup> The true church will have unity in government under a visible head.<sup>16</sup> Thus much like the Council of Trent, the identification of the church with the Catholic Church is assumed. While the Catechism speaks of the position of individual heretics and schismatics in relation to the true church

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<sup>11</sup> This catechism heavily influenced all subsequent Roman Catholic catechisms until the appearance of the Dutch Catechism in 1966 and had a significant role for many centuries in forming the faith of countless clergy and laity regarding the nature of the church. See Eric Jay, *The Church*, 202. Jared Wicks also notes that the Catechism of Trent was one of a few major official sources of pre-Vatican II ecclesiology. See Jared Wicks, "Questions and Answers on the New Responses of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith," *Ecumenical Trends* 36, no. 7 (July/August 2007): 7.

<sup>12</sup> John McHugh and Charles Callan, eds., *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1923): 77.

<sup>13</sup> "The good are those who are linked together not only by the profession of the same faith, and the participation of the same Sacraments, but also by the spirit of grace and the bond of charity." Ibid., 78.

<sup>14</sup> "Heretics and schismatics are excluded from the Church, because they have separated from her and belong to her only as deserters belong to the army from which they have deserted." Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 79-82.

<sup>16</sup> "It is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers that this visible head is necessary to establish and preserve unity in the Church." Ibid., 79.



(they are outside of it), nothing is said about non-Catholic communities as such. The implication is that there is one true church, the holy Roman church, and all other non-Catholic Christian communities are false churches.

### *1.1.3 Robert Bellarmine*

Some theologians claim Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) was the most influential Catholic ecclesiolgist until Yves Congar.<sup>17</sup> An Italian Jesuit, Bellarmine was professor of controversial theology at Louvain from 1569-76. In 1576 he was appointed to the *Collegium Romanum* to teach what was then known as “controversial theology.”<sup>18</sup> His most famous work, *Disputations against the Heretics of the Present Time on the Controversies Regarding the Christian Faith*, was published between 1586 and 1593.<sup>19</sup>

Bellarmino’s ecclesiology was marked by an insistence on the visibility of the church. Against the reformers who held that the true church consists only of the elect, or of the predestined, or of those justified by faith, he argued that such a church would be invisible, since God alone would know who belonged to it.<sup>20</sup> In response, Bellarmine crafted a definition of the church which was still being quoted in manuals of theology as late as World War I.<sup>21</sup> “The one and true Church is the community of men brought together by the profession of the same Christian faith and conjoined in the confession of the same sacraments, under the government of the legitimate pastors and especially the

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<sup>17</sup> See Eric Plumer, “The Development of Ecclesiology: Early Church to the Reformation,” in *The Gift of the Church*, 42.

<sup>18</sup> Controversial theology, concerned with the theological discussion of matters dividing the churches, was a forerunner of later ecumenical theology. See Heinrich Beck, “Ecumenism,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (London: Burns and Oates, 1975): 421-23.

<sup>19</sup> Jay, *The Church*, 202-3.

<sup>20</sup> Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992): 88.

<sup>21</sup> Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 47.

one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman pontiff.”<sup>22</sup> His definition contains three conditions for belonging to the true church, all of which are external and visibly verifiable. These criteria allow Bellarmine to exclude all who in his opinion do not belong to the church: Profession of the true faith excludes infidels and heretics; communion in the sacraments excludes catechumens and excommunicated persons; submission to legitimate pastors excludes schismatics.<sup>23</sup> For Bellarmine, the church is a society “as visible and palpable as the community of the Roman people, or the Kingdom of France, or the Republic of Venice.”<sup>24</sup>

Despite these external criteria Bellarmine knew there was more to the church than that described *ab externis*.<sup>25</sup> He made a distinction (though not a separation as some have mistakenly assumed) between the body and the soul of the church. For him the visible external elements constituted the “body” of the church. Bellarmine taught the soul of the church consisted in the inner gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as faith, hope and charity. Still only the visible elements are required for membership in the church; otherwise this would conflict with its visibility.<sup>26</sup>

#### 1.1.4 Summary

This review of a few significant examples of ecclesiology in the Counter-Reformation period makes clear that the limits of ecclesiality in the church were only considered from a very narrow point of view. The communal and personal aspects of the church were neglected in favor of its visible and institutional aspects. Michael Fahey

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<sup>22</sup> Cited in Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church: Expanded Edition* (New York: Doubleday, 1987): 16.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>25</sup> Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 48.

<sup>26</sup> Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church*, 88.

notes what we have seen above, namely that Catholic ecclesiology of this period did not explicitly reflect on the fact that what they were describing was in fact a divided church, nor did they grapple with the mystery of the entire Christian community of faith. Rather theological expositions on the church were highly polemical, apologetic and confessional in character.<sup>27</sup>

What then, if anything, can Counter-Reformation ecclesiology teach us, about the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities? In the search for a standard of “ecclesial fruitfulness,” it may be worthwhile to reflect on the Counter-Reformation emphasis on the visibility of the church. While such an emphasis applied mostly to the institutional structures of the church, it may be more illuminative to consider the possibility that certain spiritual and communal aspects of a particular Christian community may produce visible effects or “fruit” whereby the presence of the true church may be recognized. Alternatively, to argue that Protestant and Anglican communities are not true “churches” because the Catholic Church is *uncertain* of the sacramental relationship Protestant and Anglican ministers have with Christ the High Priest in the celebration of the Eucharist (see the above quote on page two from *One Bread One Body*) suggests that the source of genuine ecclesiality, the sacramental presence of Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist, is in a sense incapable of being discerned when the normal institutional signs (i.e. apostolic succession in the episcopate) are missing or otherwise imperfectly realized. In this dissertation I intend to explore

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Fahey, “Ecumenical Ecclesiology,” in *The Gift of the Church*, 112-113.

whether a standard of “ecclesial fruitfulness” could possibly discern this sacramental presence.

## 1.2 *The Nineteenth Century*

Michael Fahey correctly observes that with the exception of Johann Adam Möhler and John Henry Newman the nineteenth century was largely dominated by an ecclesiology that saw the Council as a “perfect society” rather than a communion of communions.<sup>28</sup> Because Möhler and Newman were such unique theologians for their time, we will examine their contributions to our topic and contrast them with the views of Pius IX and the First Vatican Council.

### 1.2.1 *Johann Adam Möhler*

Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) was perhaps the most well-known member of the Tübingen School. This theological school, consisting of Catholic theological faculty at the University of Tübingen, numbered several distinguished faculty in its first thirty years, including Möhler’s teacher, Johann Sebastian Drey (1777-1853).<sup>29</sup> In his short lifetime Möhler produced two seminal ecclesiological works. His 1825 work, *Unity in the Church or the Principle of Catholicism*,<sup>30</sup> defined the church *ab internis* rather than *ab externis*.<sup>31</sup> The ecclesiology in this work was markedly pneumatocentric.<sup>32</sup> Eight

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 116. Marie-Joseph le Guillou says the concept of the church as a perfect society emphasizes the church as: 1) self-sufficient and independent; 2) unequal in that it is organized hierarchically; and 3) supernatural, by reason of its efficient and final causes. See Marie-Joseph le Guillou, “Church,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (London: Burns and Oates, 1975): 215.

<sup>29</sup> Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 55.

<sup>30</sup> Johann Adam Möhler, *Unity in the Church or the Principle of Catholicism*, trans. Peter C. Erb (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

<sup>31</sup> Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 56.

<sup>32</sup> Möhler writes: “Because the Spirit fills her, the Church, the totality of believers that the Spirit forms, is the unconquerable treasure of the new life principle....” *Unity in the Church*, 84.

years later Möhler published his second work, *Symbolism*,<sup>33</sup> in which he built an ecclesiology that was strongly incarnational and christological. The Chalcedonian formula served as the basis for his later ecclesiology.<sup>34</sup> Concerning Möhler's differing approaches to ecclesiology, Dennis Doyle notes, "In this difference [of theological method] lies the root of a basic tension in Catholic theology that still exists today."<sup>35</sup>

Möhler is significant for this topic in several ways. He constructed his ecclesiology over and against the almost exclusively institutional understanding of the church as formulated by Counter-Reformation theologians such as Bellarmine.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, he approached the church as essentially a fellowship or communion carrying forth in history the relationship between Jesus and his disciples.<sup>37</sup> In addition, Möhler is often credited with revolutionizing the field of ecclesiology. As Himes observes, "Möhler did not give new answers to the ecclesiological questions and disputes of the preceding centuries. He turned ecclesiology in an entirely different direction and raised

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<sup>33</sup> Johann Adam Möhler, *Symbolism: Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced by Their Symbolical Writings*, trans. James Burton Robertson (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> Möhler wrote: "So Christ established a community; and his divine word, his living will, and the love emanating from him exerted an internal, binding power upon his followers; so that an inclination implanted by him in the hearts of believers, corresponded to his outward institution. And thus a living, well-connected, visible association of the faithful sprang up, whereof it might be said—there they are, there is his Church, his institution wherein he continueth to live, his spirit continueth to work, and the word uttered by him eternally resounds. Thus the visible Church, from the point of view here taken, is the Son of God himself, everlastingly manifesting himself among men in a human form, perpetually renovated, and eternally young—the permanent incarnation of the same, as in Holy Writ, even the faithful are called 'the body of Christ.'" *Symbolism*, 36.

<sup>35</sup> Dennis M. Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology: Vision and Versions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Book, 2000): 24.

<sup>36</sup> Möhler wrote: "The concept of the Church is defined in a one-sided manner if she is designated as a construction or an association, founded for the preservation and perpetuation of the Christian faith. Rather she is much more an offspring of this faith, an action of love living in believers through the Holy Spirit." *Unity in the Church*, 209.

<sup>37</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 24.

an entirely new set of questions.”<sup>38</sup> Möhler is also a seminal figure because of the impact he has had on modern Catholic ecclesiology. Not only did his thought influence the ecclesiology of the Roman School, but Möhler’s later incarnation-centered ecclesiology was an important influence in Pius XII’s encyclical, *Mystici Corporis*.<sup>39</sup> Finally, his ecclesiology had a formative impact on several notable twentieth-century ecclesiologists such as Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, and Karl Rahner, as well as Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper.<sup>40</sup>

Dennis Doyle compares Möhler’s ecclesiology to a layered cake. While the top layer consists of the inner life of the Trinity and the communal life which is shared with believers, the bottom layer contains the visible church as it developed in history, with unity expressed in the episcopate and papacy.<sup>41</sup> Möhler himself described these “layers” in terms of internal and external unity:

The Church itself is the real, realized reconciliation of human beings with God through Christ. Because of this, individuals are reconciled with one another through Christ and through love in him as a unity with him. Thus they are and manifest a unity among themselves; this is the inner essence of the Catholic Church. The episcopate, the constitution of the Church, is only the external expression of its essence, not the essence itself. This distinction must always be maintained. External unity in the episcopate flows out from the internal.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike Bellarmine, who described the church as primarily a visible society defined by certain externally verifiable criteria, Möhler placed the essence of the church in the actual reconciliation that has been achieved between God and humankind through Christ. It is this spiritual unity that defines the constitution of the church, not any institutional criteria:

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<sup>38</sup> Himes, *Ongoing Incarnation*, 326.

<sup>39</sup> Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 58.

<sup>40</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 23.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Möhler, *Unity in the Church*, 246.

“All believers thus form the body of Christ, and among themselves are a spiritual unity, just as the higher principle from which that unity is begotten and formed is itself but one and the same.”<sup>43</sup>

Moreover, Möhler also recognized the essential role of the Eucharist in creating the church. For him, the Eucharist is the highest representation of church unity, bringing together fellowship with Christ and fellowship among believers through the Spirit.<sup>44</sup>

Möhler wrote, “This mysticism (of the Spirit essentially communicating itself to believers), grounded in the essence of Catholicism, stands in the closest relationship to Catholicism’s characteristic mode of grasping the Eucharist. The Spirit that penetrates and gives life to all believers must in this way unite them to a greater life of the whole, beget a spiritual community, and bring forth a unity of all.”<sup>45</sup>

Although Möhler clearly emphasized that the essence of the church consists in its inner spiritual unity, it would nevertheless be a mistake to conclude that the external visible structures of the church are either unimportant or non-essential. For Möhler, communion among believers is actually measured according to their union with the local bishop.<sup>46</sup> The bishop is an image and expression of an internal dynamism present in all believers:

All believers, as soon as the forming, holy principle was active in them, felt themselves so drawn to one another and so striving for union that this inner movement was not satisfied until it saw itself formed in an image. The bishop is thus the uniting of believers made visible in a specific place, the love of believers

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 82-83.

<sup>44</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Möhler, *Unity in the Church*, 82.

<sup>46</sup> Möhler wrote: “Therefore, the community of believers with one another is measured according to its union with the bishop, and the love of believers for Christ is the original image of that union as well as the expression and impression of it...” *Unity in the Church*, 217.

for one another made personal, the manifestation and living center point of the Christian disposition striving toward unity.<sup>47</sup>

In section thirty-seven of *Symbolism*, Möhler extended the inseparable connection believers have with Christ through the local bishop to the episcopate as a whole.

Fellowship with Christ implies and demands fellowship with the Apostolic College and those commissioned by it.<sup>48</sup>

How then did Möhler understand individual Protestants and their communities in relationship to the church and its unity? In his view, it is not within the nature of a believer to cause or participate in a schism:

The very thought of resisting her [the church], of setting himself [i.e. the believer] up in opposition to her will, is one against which his inmost feelings revolt, to which his whole nature is abhorrent: and to bring about a schism—to destroy unity—is a crime, before whose heinousness his bosom trembles, and from which his soul recoils.<sup>49</sup>

For a believer to actually forsake communion with the visible church is therefore tantamount to denying Christ.<sup>50</sup> While Möhler believed it was his duty to love

Protestants and even acknowledged that among some Protestants of his day there was a

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<sup>47</sup> Möhler, *Unity in the Church*, 217-218.

<sup>48</sup> Möhler wrote: “Moreover, the administration of the sacraments, as well as the preaching of the word, was entrusted by the Lord to the apostolic college and to those commissioned by it; so that all believers, by means of this Apostolic College are linked to the community, and in a living manner connected with it. The fellowship with Christ is accordingly the fellowship with his community—the internal union with him a communion with his Church. Both are inseparable, and Christ is in the Church, and the Church in him....” *Symbolism*, 261.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 261-262.

<sup>50</sup> Möhler wrote: “The Catholic Church teaches an essential living union with Christ. The believer is to have taken this up in his or her whole being.... Moreover, the union among believers is a visible and living union; it is inner love that as an inner union must express itself externally.... The person who gives up the living visible union with believers and only wishes to save the invisible one, denies Christ. Such a conceptual and intellectual union with the Church is then looked upon as none at all, and the heretic as a result finds himself or herself outside the Church. Only through repentance and renewal of life can such a one again be taken up into the Church.” *Unity in the Church*, 311.



desire for unity,<sup>51</sup> nevertheless he did not consider them as in the church: “Anyone who is separated from him [the bishop] has withdrawn from the Christian community of all and is separated from the Church.”<sup>52</sup>

Möhlner did not allow that complete institutional break offs and new beginnings are ever legitimate in the church. The Catholic Church remains always the only true, even if oftentimes poorly implemented, visible expression of the deeper underlying unity that comes from the bondedness of all Christians in the Spirit.<sup>53</sup> A genuine communal religious act without the Catholic bishop is therefore impossible.<sup>54</sup>

Although Möhlner strongly sympathized with the Reformers concerning the need for reform, he judged them to have been illegitimate in their moving beyond a Catholic framework: “The reformers took their position outside the Church, tore apart the life of the Church, made principles that were opposed to all communal life and, in their results, necessarily to all Christianity.... They separated and thus set up separating and destructive principles.”<sup>55</sup> For Möhlner, the root of every sect and heresy is egoism.<sup>56</sup>

While Möhlner’s ecclesiology did not attribute any ecclesial reality to Protestant communities, it is nevertheless a significant development over the ecclesiology of the Counter-Reformation period. He recognized that the dominant ecclesiology of his day was static, institutional, monarchical, and overly centralized. In contrast, Möhlner put

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<sup>51</sup> See Möhlner, *Unity in the Church*, 153.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>53</sup> See Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 29.

<sup>54</sup> See Möhlner, *Unity in the Church*, 219.

<sup>55</sup> Möhlner, *Unity in the Church*, 266. See also Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 34.

<sup>56</sup> Möhlner wrote: “Every sect creates a god according to its own character, and because egoism lies at its root, it can thus lift itself up only to a constrained, narrow-hearted God and Christ who create a little enlightened group abandoning those who lived earlier or are outside of it.” *Unity in the Church*, 152.

forward an ecclesiology that was dynamic, organic, collegial, and pluriform.<sup>57</sup> While much of Möhler's ecclesiology served his anti-Protestant apologetic purposes, nevertheless his ecclesiology laid the groundwork for a monumental step forward in the evaluation of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. Dennis Doyle remarks on the ecumenical possibilities of Möhler's ecclesiology:

For once communion, that is, fellowship among believers with God, becomes the primary reference point for identifying what constitutes the church, many ecumenical avenues open up. Institutional issues remain important, even essential, but they are still secondary to the spiritual dimension of communion. Communion with each other and with God is the deepest thing that Christians share.<sup>58</sup>

### *1.2.2 John Henry Newman*

John Henry Newman (1801-1890) was leader of the Tractarian Movement at Oxford and later became one of England's most famous converts to Catholicism. He is well known for his ideas on the development of doctrine and the *sensus fidelium*. After the First Vatican Council he pushed for a more moderate interpretation of the newly defined dogma on papal infallibility than many were suggesting at the time. His understanding of ecclesiality outside the Catholic Church as both an Anglican and a Catholic is important for our topic.

As an Anglican, Newman supported an idea commonly called the "branch theory" of the universal church.<sup>59</sup> This ecclesiology postulated that portions or branches of the one Catholic Church now exist in a state of separation from one another:

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<sup>57</sup> See Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 34.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>59</sup> "The so called branch theory, first articulated within Anglicanism in the nineteenth century, was officially condemned in a letter of the holy office to Anglican bishops in 1864." See Richard Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making* (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2006): 69.

That vast Catholic body, ‘the Holy Church throughout all the world,’ is broken into many fragments by the power of the Devil; just as some huge barrier cliff which once boldly fronted the sea is at length cleft, parted, overthrown by the waves. Some portions of it are altogether gone, and those that remain are separated from each other.<sup>60</sup>

The primary branch churches for Newman were the Roman, Greek and English churches.<sup>61</sup>

The Anglican Newman believed that what he called “the Church Catholic” of antiquity lost the fullness of its unity over the course of time.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, this unity, while significantly damaged, was not altogether destroyed but remains in the Church Catholic (i.e. in its three branches) in various degrees of fullness:

The Church Catholic, being no longer one in the fullest sense, does not enjoy her predicted privileges in the fullest sense.... Further it may be remarked, that since the duty of unity admits of fuller or scantier fulfillment, it does not follow, though it has been broken in its highest sense, that therefore it is altogether lost, and its privileges with it; or again, that it would be lost in the same sense by every kind of infringement, or is actually lost in the same degree in every place.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, while intercommunion between branch churches is important for Newman, it is not an essential mark of a true church.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the failure of the English church to maintain communion with other branches is not evidence for Newman that it is a false church. Rather the constitutive feature of a true church is the preservation of its ministry in the historic apostolic succession: “What is the essential note [of a true ‘church’]?”

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<sup>60</sup> John Henry Newman, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. 3 (London: Longman’s, Green and Co., 1907): 191.

<sup>61</sup> Newman wrote: “We are the English Catholics; abroad are the Roman Catholics, some of whom are also among ourselves; elsewhere are the Greek Catholics, and so on.” Ibid., 191-192.

<sup>62</sup> Newman wrote: “The Universal Church has fallen into errors and is divided branch against branch.” Ibid., 385.

<sup>63</sup> John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church: The Via Media of the Anglican Church*, vol. 1 (London: Longman’s, Green and Co., 1901): 201. Hereafter cited as *Via Media*.

<sup>64</sup> For Newman, as an Anglican and as a Catholic, the term “intercommunion” means “an organized union of churches.” For example, see *Essays Critical and Historical*, vol. 2 (London: Longman’s, Green and Co., 1907): 23.

Because intercommunion is an important one, it does not therefore follow that it is a sine qua non, or that the essence of the Church does not rather lie in the possession of Apostolic Succession.”<sup>65</sup> Even as an Anglican however, Newman had little regard for the Protestant communities. In Newman’s eyes, most Protestant communities, not having properly preserved apostolic succession in ministry, are merely called “sects” and are not branches of the Catholic Church.<sup>66</sup>

With Newman’s conversion to Rome, his understanding of the ecclesiality of non-Catholic communities narrowed. He repudiated his former view that granted that the English and Greek churches were true branches of the Church Catholic and embraced the idea that the church is identical with the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>67</sup> Newman argued that branch churches were inevitably Erastian, or unduly subservient to the State.<sup>68</sup> In contrast to his earlier Anglican views, the church’s unity no longer admitted of degrees of fullness but rather consisted of all Christians’ visible membership in a single corporate institution: “Visible unity surely does not admit of degrees. Christians are either one polity or they are not. We cannot talk of a little unity.”<sup>69</sup> Newman also changed his mind on the necessity of intercommunion among all branch churches as an essential mark of

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<sup>65</sup> Newman, *Essays Critical and Historical*, 39.

<sup>66</sup> See for example, Newman, *Via Media*, 193.

<sup>67</sup> Newman wrote: “The Communion of Rome is the Catholic Church.” See John Henry Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching*, vol.1 (London: Longman’s, Green and Co., 1901): 336. Hereafter cited as *Difficulties*. Further on he said: “The Church of Rome and Catholicism are synonymous terms.” Ibid., 337.

<sup>68</sup> Newman wrote: “The only other course which lies open to them [those desiring to leave the English church] is either that of joining the communion of some other National or Branch Church, or, on the other hand, that of founding a Sect; but a Branch or National Church is inevitably Erastian.” Ibid., 337.

“Erastianism,” named after the Swiss theologian Thomas Erastus (1524-83), means the ascendancy of the state over the church in ecclesiastical matters. See *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Erastianism.”

<sup>69</sup> See Note 8 to Newman, *Via Media*, 202.

the Catholic Church. He wrote: “The Church *is* Catholic...one organised body, expanded over the whole earth, and in active intercommunion part with part, so that no one part acts without acting on and acting with every other.”<sup>70</sup>

Concerning the Anglican and Greek communions, the Catholic Newman considered them anti-Catholic bodies and false churches.<sup>71</sup> While this is certainly a less positive evaluation of their ecclesial status as compared with his former Anglican views, he nevertheless recognized that these communities have preserved many of the sacraments and through doing so are a means of salvation for many in their fold:

It is consolatory to reflect how the schism or heresy, which the self-will of a monarch or of a generation has caused, does not suffice altogether to destroy the work for which in some distant age Evangelists have left their homes, and Martyrs have shed their blood. Thus, the blessing is inestimable to England, so far as among us the Sacrament of Baptism is validly administered to any portion of the population. In Greece, where a far greater attention is paid to ritual exactness, the whole population may be considered regenerate; half the children born into the world pass through baptism from a schismatical Church to heaven, and in many of the rest the same Sacrament may be the foundation of a supernatural life, which is gifted with perseverance in the hour of death.... And further, if we consider that there is a true priesthood in certain countries, and a true sacrifice, the benefits of Mass to those who never had the means of knowing better, may be almost the same as they are in the Catholic Church.<sup>72</sup>

Unlike the Greek and Anglican “anti-Catholic” communions, Newman continued to view Protestant communities as nothing but “sects.” While joining one of the Erastian anti-Catholic bodies was bad, it was worse to join a Protestant sect: “And I shall show

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<sup>70</sup> Newman, *Difficulties*, 176. Emphasis original. Thus for Newman, “intercommunion” between churches means that every local church is in organizational and institutional unity with every other local church.

<sup>71</sup> Newman wrote: “The anti-Catholic bodies...are mainly or solely the Greek and the Anglican communities....” Ibid., 334. He later argues that such bodies are as inevitable as infidels, false prophets and antichrists: “While, then, I think it plain that the existence of large Anti-Catholic bodies professing Christianity are as inevitable, from the nature of the case, as infidel races or states, except under some extraordinary dispensation of divine grace, while there must ever be in the world false prophets and Antichrists....” Ibid., 353.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 353-354.

today that, bad as it is for a man to take the State for his guide and master in religion, or to become an Erastian, it is worse still to become a Sectarian, that is, to be his own Doctor and his own Pope.”<sup>73</sup> Although Newman said little about the salvific nature of Protestant communities themselves, he believed individual Protestants could be saved due to invincible ignorance. Yet, they are saved in spite of their communities rather than because of them.<sup>74</sup>

Elements of both Newman’s Anglican and Catholic views on non-Catholic churches and communities would eventually find acceptance in Catholic ecclesiology. Newman’s ability as an Anglican to see the unity of the church as remaining in various degrees of intensity in the Anglican, Greek and Catholic churches anticipates some of the ecclesiological developments of Vatican II. His insight as a Catholic, that non-Catholic churches and communities possess in various degrees many “elements” of the church which serve as means of salvation for many of its members, certainly reflects what would be taught at Vatican II. Nevertheless, Newman did not recognize the ecclesial reality of Protestant communities, either as an Anglican or a Catholic.

### *1.2.3 Pius IX and Vatican I*

Pius IX, whose pontificate of nearly thirty-two years is the longest in the history of the Catholic Church, was pope from 1846 to 1878. In his pontificate he published the “Syllabus of Errors” against the liberal ideals of the modern world, defined the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, convoked the First Vatican Council and oversaw the

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<sup>73</sup> See *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>74</sup> Newman wrote: “And thus Protestants may be living in the midst of Catholic light, and labouring under the densest and most stupid prejudices; and yet we may be able to view them with hope, though with anxiety—with the hope that the question has never occurred to them, strange as it may seem, whether we are not right and they wrong.” *Ibid.*, 356.

definition of papal infallibility.<sup>75</sup> One letter in particular illustrates his thought on the non-Catholic Christianity. In his letter *Iam Vos Omnes* (1868), Pius IX announces the convocation of a general Council, and he invites Christians who are not Catholics to examine whether they are walking in the way of salvation. He exhorts them to return to the unity of the Catholic Church. One section of his letter demonstrates his opposition to the branch theory of the universal church which had been expounded by some Anglican divines (see Newman above):

Now anyone who wishes to examine with care and to meditate on the condition of the different religious societies divided among themselves and separated from the Catholic Church...will easily be convinced that no one of these societies nor all of them together in any way constitute or are that one Catholic Church which our Lord founded and established and which he willed to create. Nor is it possible, either, to say that these societies are either a number or a part of this same Church, since they are visibly separated from Catholic unity.<sup>76</sup>

For Pius IX, to separate from the Roman See is to create a human church and to cease to be part of the church of Christ.<sup>77</sup>

The same understanding of non-Catholic Christianity was evident at the First Vatican Council as well. According to Avery Dulles, “The institutional outlook [of the church] reached its culmination in the second half of the nineteenth century, and was expressed with singular clarity in the first schema of the Dogmatic Constitution on the

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<sup>75</sup> See Richard P. McBrien, *Lives of the Popes: The Pontiffs from St. Peter to John Paul II* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997): 343.

<sup>76</sup> Jacques Dupuis and Josef Neuner, eds., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church* (New York: Alba House, 2001): #901.

<sup>77</sup> See the encyclical letter of Pius IX, *Quartus Supra* (1873): “If, therefore, the sovereign Pontiff is called a stranger by any one of the Churches, that Church will be, in consequence, a stranger to the apostolic See, that is, to the Catholic Church which is one, and which alone was founded on Peter by the Lord’s word. Whoever separates the Church from this foundation no longer preserves the divine and Catholic Church, but is striving to make a human church.” *The Christian Faith* #903.

Church prepared for Vatican I.”<sup>78</sup> The preconciliar commission of the Council prepared two draft documents, one on the pope and another on the church. The schema on the pope developed into the dogmatic constitution *Pastor Aeternus*, while the second schema on the church was never discussed.<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless, this schema on the church became to a great extent the basis for dealing with ecclesiology after Vatican I.<sup>80</sup>

Chapter Two of the schema on the church insisted that it was founded and instituted by Jesus himself. He wished to bind his religion to the community he founded such that “outside this community there should be no true Christian religion.”<sup>81</sup> Chapter Three emphasized the church as a true, perfect, spiritual and supernatural society:

We teach and declare: The Church has all the marks of a true Society. Christ did not leave this society undefined and without a set form. Rather, he himself gave its existence, and his will determined the form of its existence and gave it its constitution. The Church is not part nor member of any other society and is not mingled in any way with any other society. It is so perfect in itself that it is distinct from all human societies and stands far above them.<sup>82</sup>

Chapter Four affirmed the visibility of the church and denied that the church was only held together by interior and hidden bonds. Finally, the schema made some very explicit statements about the ecclesiality of all communities separated from the Catholic Church:

The Church is so completely bounded and determined in her constitution that no society separated from the unity of belief or from communion with this body can in any way be called a part or member of the Church. Further, the Church is not distributed and divided among the various societies that call themselves Christian; she is wholly self-contained in unity.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 36.

<sup>79</sup> See Michael Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 61-62.

<sup>80</sup> Josef Neuner and Heinrich Roos, eds., *The Teaching of the Catholic Church as Contained in Her Documents* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967): 211.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 212-13.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.



This quote thus explicitly condemned the branch theory of the universal church. The schema also explicitly identified the church of Christ with the Catholic Church, saying that “this true and blessed Church of Christ is none other than the one holy, catholic and apostolic Roman Church.”<sup>84</sup>

#### *1.2.4 Summary*

Despite the fact that neither Möhler nor Newman attributed any genuine ecclesiality to Protestant communities, both theologians significantly contributed to the development of more positive evaluations for genuine ecclesiality outside the Catholic Church. Möhler’s ability to connect ecclesiology to other areas of theology such as pneumatology and Christology would provide intellectual pathways for others to reflect more deeply on the nature of non-Catholic Christian communities. Newman’s ability as an Anglican to consider the church as imperfectly and partially realized in different degrees and his ability as a Catholic to see the salvific nature of the separated Eastern communities produced categories of thought that would be picked up by twentieth-century ecclesiology and eventually incorporated into the ecclesiology of Vatican II.

In contrast to both Möhler and Newman stands the official position of Rome on non-Catholic Christianity. Pius IX and the schema of Vatican I continued in the very narrow institutional ecclesiology of the Counter-Reformation. Rome’s only significant contribution to the topic of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities in this period consists in its definitive rejection of the branch-theory of the universal church

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 220.

such as Newman articulated as an Anglican. Twentieth century Catholic ecclesiology would also refuse to admit that the church of Christ has lost its unity.

### 1.3 *The Twentieth Century Prior to Vatican II*

In this section I shall consider the perspective of three theologians whose thought significantly influenced the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council: Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac and Sebastian Tromp.<sup>85</sup> While many individuals significantly influenced the ecclesiology of the Council, it is difficult to find two theologians whose contributions match those of Congar and de Lubac. Joseph Komonchak has said of Congar that “there is no theologian who did more to prepare for Vatican II or who had a larger role in the orientation and even in the composition of the documents.”<sup>86</sup> Richard McBrien likewise has referred to Congar as “the most distinguished ecclesiologist of this century and perhaps of the entire post-Tridentine era.”<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, as Dennis Doyle states, “There is only one figure whose contribution is comparable to that of Yves Congar, that is the French Jesuit Henri de Lubac (1896-1991).”<sup>88</sup>

Fr. Sebastian Tromp, insofar as he was the principal architect of Pius XII’s 1943 encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, must also be mentioned because of the encyclical’s importance for ecclesiology up to the Second Vatican Council. Fr. Tromp’s ecclesiology is notable for my topic insofar as it offers a transitional ecclesiology between the Counter-Reformation understanding of the church as a perfect society and the

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<sup>85</sup> For this brief survey of these three theologians, all of whom lived beyond the Second Vatican Council, I shall only consider their preconiliar contributions to our topic in this chapter.

<sup>86</sup> Joseph Komonchak, “The Return of Yves Congar,” *Commonweal* 110 (July 15, 1983): 404.

<sup>87</sup> Richard P. McBrien, “Church and Ministry: The Achievement of Yves Congar,” *Theology Digest* 32 (1985): 203.

<sup>88</sup> Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 56.

communion ecclesiology of Vatican II. Tromp's ecclesiological perspective on the relationship of non-Catholic Christians to the mystical body of Christ, which he totally identified with the Catholic Church, significantly influenced the Second Vatican Council's preparatory draft on the church, no doubt due to the influence that Tromp had as secretary of the preparatory theological commission of Vatican II.<sup>89</sup>

### 1.3.1 Yves Congar

Richard Gaillardetz notes that Congar is considered by many to be the father of Catholic ecumenism.<sup>90</sup> He is perhaps the first major Catholic theologian to attempt to systematically reflect on the problem of Christian disunity. His work, *Chrétiens désunis*, first published in 1937, is widely cited in Catholic ecclesiology.<sup>91</sup> The penultimate chapter, entitled "The Status of our Separated Brethren" is a seminal examination of the status of non-Catholic Christian communities in relation to the church of Christ. Congar first examines the position of the non-Catholic Christian in respect to the one church of Christ. The second half of the chapter then considers the relation of separated Christian communities to church of Christ.

Congar elegantly described the ecclesiological dilemma that non-Catholic Christianity presents for the Catholic Church:

In claiming for our Church that it is the true and only one, what do we make of other 'Churches' and other baptized Christians, with their worship and their prayer? What is their Christian significance? And moreover, is not a sincere

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<sup>89</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 69-70. For the role of Sebastian Tromp in writing *Mystici Corporis*, see Francis Sullivan, "The One Church in Current Ecclesiology," *Ecumenical Trends* 38, no. 1 (January 2009): 4; Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988): 23; and Richard McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* (London: Collins, 1969): 84, 104-112.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>91</sup> Yves Congar, *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, trans. M.A. Bousfield (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1939). Originally published as *Chrétiens désunis* (Paris: Cerf, 1937).

Protestant, believing, truly consecrated to God and living a holy life, more really a member of the Church than a baptized Catholic who is slack and sinful or has perhaps lost his faith altogether? In one sense, obviously, the answer is Yes. But if that is so, what is the point of the Church to which one can belong without being of it, and how are we to think of all this?<sup>92</sup>

When considering individual non-Catholic Christians in a state of grace, Congar believed that it was impossible to evade the conclusion that they must belong in some way to the church even though they are not in its visible membership: “The Church is defined as the Body of Christ: these souls therefore [because of the principle *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*] must belong in some fashion to the Church, for having received grace they cannot be alien to the mystical Body of the Lord.”<sup>93</sup>

Even though Congar agreed that non-Catholic Christians must belong in some sense to the Catholic Church, he rejected the traditional explanation that such Christians are in the soul of the church but not in its visible body.<sup>94</sup> Congar argued that the distinction that must be made concerns not what “part” of the church the non-Catholic Christian belongs to (body or soul) but rather the manner in which the non-Catholic Christians belongs to the one church:

In any case the distinction concerns not the Church, which can never be a body without a soul or a soul without a body, but the way of belonging to it, that is to say, belonging to the body by the very fact of belonging to the soul, but in a

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<sup>92</sup> Congar, *Divided Christendom*, 222.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Congar credits Bellarmine as the first to make this distinction in *De Ecclesia et Conciliis*, III, c. 2. He knows only of one reference to it in official church documents: the encyclical *Satis Cognitum* of Leo XII (June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1896). Regarding this distinction, he wrote: “But the facile distinction between the body and the soul of the Church does not seem theologically a very happy one, though imaginatively and verbally attractive. It leads one to suppose that there is in the Church a sort of solid nucleus, and around it, like a halo, a somewhat shadowy soul. But how could one in any sense be in the soul of the Church without being, by that very fact, in the body of the Church which it animates? Is not the body of the Church to be found where its soul is, and for that very reason? And must not the body of the Church be co-extensive with its soul?” *ibid.*, 224-25.

manner which may be either effective, plenary and visible (*re, numero et merito, corporaliter*); or imperfect, by desire, invisible and moral (*voto, mentaliter*).<sup>95</sup>

Stated in another way, Congar held that the church is essentially humanity reconciled with God in Christ. Therefore, an individual soul is united to the church to the degree and in the same manner that he or she is united to Christ.<sup>96</sup>

In my estimation Congar's solution is notable in that he recognized that membership in the church is not an either-or situation—one may be more or less fully incorporated into the church:

There is a perfect membership of the Church—and so of Christ—in one who lives according to the principles of the new life of reconciliation with God which Christ has given to His Church. But there is an imperfect membership of the Church, and of Christ, in one who lives only by one or other of the new principles of the new life. It is because the benefits of the new Covenant are many that it is possible to belong to the Church in varying degrees and to claim membership of it on various grounds.<sup>97</sup>

Congar further illustrated how a non-Catholic Christian may be incompletely joined to the church through the hypothetical example of a Protestant child validly baptized into their own communion. Congar stated that Catholic tradition unequivocally teaches that anyone validly baptized in a non-Catholic community is by that very act a genuine member of the one true church of Jesus Christ.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, “Catholic though [the Protestant child] be by grace of that baptism, he will in fact find himself in an objective Christian milieu which is impoverished and distorted, a confessional or ecclesiastical order which is not the full and true life of the Church of Christ.”<sup>99</sup> The Protestant child

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 231.

will never find in his or her own community “the whole of the living principles ordained by God to bring all humanity in fellowship with Himself.”<sup>100</sup> Still, it is through the principles of the new life incompletely realized in his or her own community that the Protestant child is imperfectly and invisibly joined to the church. Congar said that “what unites them to Christ is a fiber of His Mystical Body, a constituent element of His Church.”<sup>101</sup> The existence of these principles outside of the one true church is abnormal and this situation calls for these elements to be fully reintegrated into the one Body of Christ which is the visible Catholic Church.<sup>102</sup>

Congar also considered in detail the separated Christian communities, asking, “Can we apply the foregoing considerations not only to individuals but also to the dissident bodies themselves, regarded as separated ecclesiastical communities? Can we call them separated ‘Churches,’ and if not, what exactly is their position in regard to that which affirms itself to be the one true Church?”<sup>103</sup> At first, Congar appears to answer these questions strongly in the negative: “We cannot say that any dissident Christian body whatever is a member of the *Una Ecclesia*.”<sup>104</sup> These separated communities merely *are themselves* in varying degrees “elements” of the one church insofar as they have preserved “those realities whereby God gathers to Himself from the midst of mankind a People which He destines to be His heirs, and which He incorporates into His

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 234-35.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 242.

Christ.”<sup>105</sup> These realities in order of importance are the sacraments, particularly baptism and the Eucharist, and the Word of God.<sup>106</sup>

Elsewhere in this chapter of *Divided Christendom*, Congar offered a more nuanced understanding of the possibility of true ecclesiality outside the Catholic Church. He noted early on that “the Church is not a simple thing of which one can say, as of an individual substance, that it is entirely present or entirely absent.”<sup>107</sup> He also saw a fundamental difference between the ecclesiality of the Eastern Orthodox and Protestant communities. The Eastern Orthodox communities have preserved the greater number of “actualizing principles” of the church because they have retained all the sacraments and lack only ecclesiastical unity with the Catholic Church. Congar conceded that they “have a true though incomplete ecclesiastical reality and can be in a sense called Churches.”<sup>108</sup> However, Protestant communities are considerably deficient:

[Protestant communities] have, in fact, preserved relatively few of the actualizing principles of the Church. They have, though not quite always, the fundamental reality which is the sacrament of baptism and, therefore, that of marriage, but they have no other sacramental reality, no priesthood, no teaching office in the strict sense of the word, though the Church’s magisterium has still some effect in them; they have a system of dogma enfeebled and distorted and an impoverished mystical tradition.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 244. Thus for Congar, “actualizing principles” of the church are similar to what Vatican II would refer to as “ecclesial elements” or “elements of sanctification and truth.” See for example LG #8 and UR #3. Congar differed from Vatican II in describing Protestant communities as a whole as “elements” of the church.

Thus, unlike the Eastern Orthodox communities, Congar considered the Protestant communities to be merely “elements” of the one true church.<sup>110</sup> While it may be appropriate to speak of a reunion of “churches” when dealing with Eastern Orthodox communities, it is only appropriate to speak of a reintegration of the Protestant communities into the Catholic Church.<sup>111</sup>

In summary, Congar’s reflection on the status of the non-Catholic Christian in the church anticipates the teaching of Vatican II in almost every way. He abandoned the traditional explanation that non-Catholics are joined to the soul but not the body of the church. He recognized that there are degrees of incorporation into the church. Congar acknowledged the importance of baptism in Protestant communities. Finally, when reflecting on the ecclesial reality of Protestant communities, he makes a giant step forward by recognizing in these communities some of the actualizing principles of the church.<sup>112</sup>

### 1.3.2 *Henri de Lubac*

Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) is relevant to my topic because of his major role in recovering the intimate connection between the Eucharist and the church. He is often remembered for the aphorism “the Eucharist makes the church.”<sup>113</sup> De Lubac’s presentation of the mutually constitutive relationship between church and Eucharist turned the discussion on the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities in a

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 247.

<sup>112</sup> For a more extensive look at Congar’s ecclesiology, see Gabriel Flynn, ed., *Yves Congar: Theologian of the Church* (Louvain: Peeters, 2005).

<sup>113</sup> See for example, Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993).



new direction, one centered essentially on the eucharistic ecclesiology of the ancient church.

While both Congar and de Lubac significantly developed a communion ecclesiology before the Second Vatican Council, de Lubac, unlike Congar, did not apply his eucharistic ecclesiology directly to the question of genuine ecclesiality outside the Catholic Church. When he did reflect on the problem of divided Christendom, he largely considered the problem using the typical institutional ecclesiology of his day, wherein true ecclesiality is not found outside the Catholic Church:

It is true that ‘the social structure of the Christian community, which moreover proclaims the wisdom of its divine Architect, is nevertheless seen to be of an entirely inferior order when compared with the spiritual gifts with which it is ornamented and by which it lives.’ Yet that structure is none the less of divine institution, at any rate in its essentials. When we recite the Credo we profess our belief in the Church; and if we believe that the Church is both a universal and a visible community, then we cannot—without betrayal of our faith—be content to grant that the universal Church is made visible and concrete to the individual by that particular community which is his, regardless of the separation of these communities one from another.<sup>114</sup>

For de Lubac, the church should be in verifiable continuity (through uninterrupted succession) with the community of the first disciples that was a clearly defined group and social in character.<sup>115</sup> Regarding the divided state of Christianity, de Lubac wrote, “Many divided bodies cannot constitute one single Church. The supposition that there could be several independent Christian societies with a ‘spiritual unity’ is ‘totally alien to

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<sup>114</sup> Henri de Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church*, trans. Michael Mason (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956): 56. Originally published as *Méditation sur l'Église* (Paris: Aubier, 1953).

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

the thought of St. Paul', and contrary to the whole of the history of primitive Christianity.”<sup>116</sup>

De Lubac's contribution to the question raised in this dissertation may be demonstrated by considering the contribution he made to eucharistic ecclesiology and its significance for the doctrine of the church as the Mystical Body of Christ. De Lubac pointed out that it was only in the twelfth century that the body of Christ, which is the church, begins to be qualified with the adjective “mystical.” Prior to this time the designation of the mystical body of Christ applied only to the Eucharist.<sup>117</sup> He noted that the idea of the church as the “mystical” body of Christ has produced two common misinterpretations. One misinterpretation denies the realism of the body of Christ and understands the qualifier “mystical” of the body of Christ to mean no more than a metaphorical or moral body. De Lubac wrote, “To some minds the natural body seems to be the solid reality, and in consequence a mystical body can hardly be more substantial than a shadow....”<sup>118</sup> Another common misinterpretation detaches the mystical body of Christ from the visible church. De Lubac said, “To some, the qualifying of St. Paul's noun with this adjective seemed to encourage an overdevelopment of the ‘mystical’ aspect of the body of Christ—that is, as equated with ‘invisible’, ‘interior’, ‘spiritual’ and ‘hidden.’”<sup>119</sup>

De Lubac argued that neither of these interpretations adequately reflects the thought of St. Paul or the early church fathers. St. Paul united in one the eucharistic

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 91.

mystery and that of the Christian community when he wrote, “Is not the bread we break a participation in Christ’s body? The one bread makes us one body, though we are many in number; the same bread is shared by all.”<sup>120</sup> According to de Lubac, the first theologians (particularly Origen) to describe the church as the *mystical* body of Christ speak of it in a eucharistic context, and all refer to this key passage of St. Paul:

By ‘the Mystical Body’ they mean neither an invisible body nor a ghostly image of a real one; they mean the *corpus in mysterio*, the body mystically signified and realized by the Eucharist—in other words, the unity of the Christian community which is made real by the ‘holy mysteries’ in an effective symbol.... Thus, the Mystical Body is the Body par excellence, that with the greatest degree of reality and truth; it is the definitive body, and in relation to it the individual body of Christ Himself may be called a figurative body, without any detracting from its reality....<sup>121</sup>

After concluding his assessment of the history of mystical body ecclesiology and its connection with the Eucharist, de Lubac wrote, “Thus everything points to a study of the relation between the Church and the Eucharist, which we may describe as standing as cause each to other. Each has been entrusted to the other, so to speak, by Christ; the Church produces the Eucharist, but the Eucharist also produces the Church.”<sup>122</sup>

How then does the Eucharist “make” the church? For de Lubac, it is through participation in the mystery of the Eucharist that believers are made one with Christ and thus with each other:

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 91-92. The quotation of St. Paul is from 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 in the Knox version.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 92. De Lubac also cites Gregory of Bergamo as another early theologian holding this view. See *ibid.*, note 2. Susan Wood comments on this passage: “Here ‘*verum*’ does not refer to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, but to the Church which is mystically signified by Christ. In a similar manner, ‘mystical’ is equated with ‘real.’ That which is most real is that which is represented *in figura*. The reality is the totality into which the Logos is incarnate. The notion is rooted in Origen...and is linked to Origen’s view that the ‘marriage’ of the Logos to humanity is *the* reality which Christ figures and in some way realizes in his hypostatic union.” In *Spiritual Exegesis and the Church in the Theology of Henri de Lubac* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans’ Publishing Company, 1998): 78. Emphasis original.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

And thus the social body of the Church, the *corpus christianorum*, united round its visible pastors for the Lord's Supper, really does become the Mystical Body of Christ; it is really Christ who assimilates it to Himself, so that the Church is then truly the '*Corpus Christi effecta*.' Christ comes among His own, makes Himself their Food; each one of them, thus united to Him, is by the same token united to all those who, like Christ Himself, receive Christ. The Head makes the unity of the Body, and that is how it is that the *mysterium fidei* is also the *mysterium Ecclesiae, par excellence*.<sup>123</sup>

Thus the church really makes herself in the celebration of the mystery. De Lubac said,

"The mystery of communication is rounded out in a mystery of communion."<sup>124</sup>

De Lubac's thought on how the Eucharist "produces" (or "constitutes") the church is most significant for the question of genuine ecclesiality outside the Catholic Church. His eucharistic basis for understanding ecclesial reality is a real advance over previous Catholic teaching, which, with a few exceptions, has viewed the reality of the church from within the institutional framework of law and jurisdiction rather than sacramental theology. De Lubac's eucharistic ecclesiology marks the beginning of a shift in Catholic thinking concerning ecclesial reality itself. Henceforth in many presentations of Catholic ecclesiology, the ecclesiality of a non-Catholic Christian community is intimately tied to the presence or absence of the eucharistic mystery in its midst. As de Lubac said, "The reality of the eucharistic presence is a guarantee for us of the 'mystical' reality of the Church."<sup>125</sup> Further on he wrote, "It 'is in the Eucharist that the mysterious essence of the Church receives a proper expression.'"<sup>126</sup>

Henri de Lubac's understanding of the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity has important implications for the ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christian communities. As the

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 113.

sacrament of unity, the purpose of the Eucharist is to make real, renew and strengthen the believer's union with Christ and by that very fact make real, renew and strengthen his or her union with the Christian community.<sup>127</sup> The proper result or fruit, therefore, of the Eucharist is unity. For this reason, de Lubac believed schismatic communities do not produce a true Eucharist: "Even though the bread and wine are validly consecrated by schismatics, it can be said that there is a true Eucharist only where there is unity—*non conficitur ibi Christus, ubi non conficitur universus*."<sup>128</sup> Quoting Pope Pelagius I, de Lubac wrote further, "What the schismatic produces is not the body of Christ...[since] an altar cut off from unity cannot bring together the reality of the body of Christ."<sup>129</sup> Here it is noteworthy is that de Lubac judged (albeit negatively) the reality of a Christian community's Eucharist according to the spiritual fruit it produces. If it produces what the Eucharist is supposed to produce, then it is a true Eucharist. If it does not, then it does not possess the fullness of the eucharistic mystery.

### 1.3.3 Sebastian Tromp and Pius XII's Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* (1943)

It is widely known that Fr. Sebastian Tromp, who would later serve as secretary of the preparatory theological commission of Vatican II, was the chief architect of Pius XII's 1943 encyclical, *Mystici Corporis Christi*.<sup>130</sup> Richard McBrien wrote that Tromp, who was a disciple of Bellarmine, demonstrated his faithfulness to the Counter-

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<sup>127</sup> Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, trans. Lancelot C. Sheppard (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958): 35. Originally published as *Catholicisme: les aspects sociaux du dogme* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1938).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>129</sup> De Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church*, 113.

<sup>130</sup> Regarding Fr. Tromp's role in the writing of *Mystici Corporis*, see note 89 above.

Reformation tradition in his work *Corpus Christi Quod est Ecclesia* (1937).<sup>131</sup> Regarding the influence of Tromp on *Mystici Corporis*, McBrien stated that “the guiding spirit [of the encyclical] is Bellarmine and the guiding hand is Tromp.”<sup>132</sup>

*Mystici Corporis* is significant for making the image of the church as the mystical body of Christ the dominant motif in ecclesiology prior to Vatican II. As Michael Himes noted, the rich scriptural and patristic resonances of mystical body ecclesiology were very muted in nineteenth-century.<sup>133</sup> The neo-scholastic ecclesiology of this period continued the ecclesiology of Bellarmine, which emphasized the church as a hierarchically structured, visible society and frequently located ecclesiology in the area of fundamental theology, arguing that Christianity requires an infallible church if it is to be preserved in the truth.<sup>134</sup> Although the neo-scholastic manuals attempted to incorporate the christological ecclesiology that began in the Tübingen school and was later carried on in the Roman school, too often the relationship between Christ and the church was reduced to that of a founder of an institution in order to support this common apologetical line. Certain extreme interpretations of mystical body ecclesiology (such as extending the hypostatic union to all members of the church or comparing the union of Christ and the Christian with transubstantiation in the Eucharist) also caused some theologians to mistrust it.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, a neospiritualist movement arose in Germany just before the appearance of the encyclical, which dichotomized the visible and invisible elements in

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<sup>131</sup> McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* 105. Fr. Tromp’s work is available in English translation as Sebastian Tromp, *Corpus Christi Quod est Ecclesia*, trans. Ann Condit (New York: Vantage Press, 1960).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>133</sup> Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 64.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 63-4.

<sup>135</sup> McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* 109.

the church at the expense of its hierarchical aspect.<sup>136</sup> McBrien noted that factors such as the growth of the ecumenical movement, the new vigor of the of the biblical movement with its emphasis on the kingdom of God, the pneumatic ecclesiology of the Orthodox, and even a certain Augustinianism in the writings of nineteenth-century theologians such as Möhler and Mathias Scheeben contributed to the rise of this new movement.<sup>137</sup>

*Mystici Corporis*, which adopted Tromp's theology with only minor variation, partially overcame the deficiency of the neo-scholastic manuals by uniting the christological ecclesiology traceable to the Roman School (and ultimately Möhler) with the Counter-Reformation concerns about the visibility of the church. It did so using Tromp's own sociological and corporative interpretation of the image of the mystical body of Christ.<sup>138</sup> An example of this interpretation of the mystical body of Christ is found in Tromp's work, *Corpus Christi Quod est Ecclesia*:

It is called the *Body* of Christ because it is a visible organism, instituted by Christ and visibly directed by Christ in his visible Vicar. It is called the *Mystical Body* of Christ because by means of an invisible principle instilled in it by Christ, that is, by the Spirit of Christ Himself, that organization, in itself, in its organs, and in its members, is unified and quickened and united to Christ and brought to perfect likeness to Him.<sup>139</sup>

Cardinal Willebrands noted that *Mystici Corporis* “stressed the spiritual and mystical nature of the Body of Christ above its social nature.”<sup>140</sup> Article sixty-three of the encyclical supports Cardinal Willebrands' statement:

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Himes, “The Development of Ecclesiology,” 63-64. See also McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* 108-9.

<sup>139</sup> Tromp, *Corpus Christi Quod est Ecclesia*, 196. Cited in McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* 106-7.

<sup>140</sup> Cardinal Willebrands, “The Ecumenical Movement—Its Problems and Driving Force,” *One in Christ* 11 (1975): 212.

The Church, a perfect society of its kind, is not made up of merely moral and juridical elements and principles. It is far superior to all other human societies; it surpasses them as grace surpasses nature, as things immortal are above all those that perish.... The Church in its entirety is not found within this natural order, any more than the whole man is encompassed within the organism of our mortal body.<sup>141</sup>

Yet despite this emphasis on the mystical and transcendent nature of the Body of Christ, Tromp in *Mystici Corporis* nevertheless dispelled any suggestion that the Body of Christ is a different reality than the visible and tangible society that is the Roman Catholic Church. The encyclical, attempting to refute the theology of the neospiritualist movement in Germany, declared:

[The body of the church] must also be something definite and perceptible to the senses.... Hence they err in a matter of divine truth, who imagine the Church to be invisible, intangible, a something merely ‘pneumatological’ as they say, by which many Christian communities, though they differ from each other in their profession of faith, are united by an invisible bond.<sup>142</sup>

It is clear that Fr. Tromp in this encyclical wanted to hold together the idea that the body of Christ is something both mystical and spiritual, which transcends the church as a visible society, without denying that this same body of Christ is nevertheless identified with the society of the Roman Catholic Church.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the formulation of *Mystici Corporis* on the relationship between the mystical body of Christ and the visible society that is the Roman Catholic Church reflects Tromp’s own understanding of this relationship as one of strict identification. Article thirteen states: “If we would define and describe this true Church of Jesus Christ—which is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church—we

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<sup>141</sup> Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* #63. Accessed online at <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_29061943\\_mystici-corporis-christi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi_en.html)>

<sup>142</sup> *Mystici Corporis* #14.



shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression ‘the Mystical Body of Christ’....”<sup>143</sup> Gregory Baum noted that theologians had so much trouble accepting this simple identification between the mystical body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church without qualification that Pius XII felt the need to reiterate this teaching just seven years later in his encyclical *Humani Generis*.<sup>144</sup> Thus, article twenty-seven of *Humani Generis* says, “Some say they are not bound by the doctrine, explained in Our Encyclical Letter of a few years ago, and based on the Sources of Revelation, which teaches that the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same thing.”<sup>145</sup>

*Mystici Corporis* also addressed the question of membership of individual non-Catholics in the Body of Christ. Article twenty-two states:

Only those are to be included as members of the Church who have been baptized and profess the true faith, and who have not been so unfortunate as to separate themselves from the unity of the Body, or been excluded by legitimate authority for grave faults committed.... It follows that those who are divided in faith or government cannot be living in the unity of such a Body, nor can they be living the life of its one Divine Spirit.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> *Mystici Corporis* #13. Tromp stated the same thing in *Corpus Christi Quod est Ecclesia*, 210: “The Mystical Body of Christ, precisely insofar as it is, and is rightly called ‘mystical,’ is that universal and social religious organization in which, by means of a juridical and visible mission, the magisterium, imperium and sacerdotium of Christ are continued under the one vicar of Christ, and in which the faithful, in accordance with the various states willed by Christ, collaborate with the hierarchy in extending the kingdom of Christ....” Cited in McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* 107.

<sup>144</sup> Gregory Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches,” in *The Church and Ecumenism*, Concilium 4, ed. Hans Küng (New York: Paulist Press, 1965): 37.

<sup>145</sup> Pius XII, *Humani Generis* #27. Accessed online at <[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xii\\_enc\\_12081950\\_humani-generis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_12081950_humani-generis_en.html)>

<sup>146</sup> *Mystici Corporis* #22.

As Baum said, *Mystici Corporis* maintained that to really be a member of the Body of Christ one must maintain the bonds of faith, sacraments and hierarchical communion.<sup>147</sup> Thus membership in the body of Christ requires participation in the visible society identified with it—the Roman Catholic Church. However, despite this restriction of membership in the body of Christ to Roman Catholics, *Mystici Corporis* did recognize that some people, whether non-Catholic Christians or non-Christians, may belong to the Roman Catholic Church *in voto* (by desire).<sup>148</sup> This same reasoning would lead Pius XII, again operating in the context of Fr. Tromp’s ecclesiology, to condemn in 1949 an exclusive interpretation of the axiom “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” (outside the Council there is no salvation).<sup>149</sup>

In summary, Richard Gaillardetz comments that *Mystici Corporis* retrieved a long neglected aspect of the church as the mystical body of Christ, but Tromp’s ecclesiology as represented in the encyclical still limited its reflections to the visibility and institutional integrity of the church.<sup>150</sup> As Gaillardetz points out, “What was needed was a

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<sup>147</sup> Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches,” 38.

<sup>148</sup> “As you know, Venerable Brethren, from the very beginning of Our Pontificate, We have committed to the protection and guidance of heaven those who do not belong to the visible Body of the Catholic Church.... For even though by an unconscious desire and longing they have a certain relationship with the Mystical Body of the Redeemer, they still remain deprived of those many heavenly gifts and helps which can only be enjoyed in the Catholic Church. Therefore may they enter into Catholic unity and, joined with Us in the one, organic Body of Jesus Christ, may they together with us run on to the one Head in the Society of glorious love.” See *Mystici Corporis* #103.

<sup>149</sup> Walter Kasper, “The Meaning and Impact of Vatican II’s Ecumenism Decree,” *Origins* 34, no. 28 (December 23, 2004): 447. This condemnation of Pope Pius XII was issued in a letter of the Holy Office to Archbishop Richard Cushing of Boston in 1949. Archbishop Cushing had appealed to Rome for an authoritative interpretation of “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” because Fr. Leonard Feeney, of the St. Benedict Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts, had accused the archbishop of heresy for teaching that salvation was possible outside the Catholic Church. Feeney was dismissed from the Society of Jesuits and excommunicated for his adherence to such an exclusive interpretation of the axiom. See Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church*, 1-4 and 135-40. See McBrien, *Do We Need the Church?* 112, who argued that Pius XII was again depending on the ecclesiology of Fr. Tromp.

<sup>150</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 43.

new basis for affirming the necessity of the church's institutional structures without making them ends in themselves, and without eclipsing the spiritual dynamism of the church."<sup>151</sup> One might add that what was needed was a way to appropriately recognize the genuine ecclesiality of non-Catholic communities without undermining the necessity of the Catholic Church's institutional structures as well.

## 2. *Vatican II on the Ecclesiality of Non-Catholic Churches*

The Second Vatican Council was undoubtedly a key ecclesial event in the life of the Catholic Church. The ecclesiological advances made at this council are crucial for discussing the ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christian communities. Two documents in particular, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and the Decree on Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), both promulgated on November 21, 1964, remain the reference point for any discussion about the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities and their relationship to the Catholic Church. Other documents promulgated by the Council, such as the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) and the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church (*Christus Dominus*) add important insights into the Council's understanding the connection between the church, the Eucharist and the episcopate.

### 2.1 *A New Model for Non-Catholic Ecclesiality: Communion Ecclesiology*

The major advances of the Council were all made possible by a fundamental paradigm shift in ecclesiology. Richard Gaillardetz notes that although we should not overlook the Council's continuity with the teaching of *Mystici Corporis*, it is clear that

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

the Council went beyond it.<sup>152</sup> While the predominant image of the church in *Mystici Corporis* was that of the mystical body of Christ as a perfect society, the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council embraced the more biblical idea of the church as a communion. Gaillardetz says, “The concept of communion can be said to undergird all of the Council’s ecclesiology. Even where the term does not appear, there are numerous passages that bring into sharp relief the relational dimension of the church....”<sup>153</sup> For example, *Lumen Gentium* #14 describes the communion present among Roman Catholics:

They are fully incorporated into the society of the church who, possessing the Spirit of Christ, accept its whole structure and all the means of salvation that have been established within it, and within its visible framework are united with Christ...by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments, ecclesiastical government and communion.<sup>154</sup>

Full incorporation into the church, which is the same as full communion with the Catholic Church,<sup>155</sup> is a variegated reality that is more complex than simple membership or non-membership in the visible society of the Roman Catholic Church, as it was in *Mystici Corporis*. Rather, full communion with the Catholic Church consists in

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<sup>152</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 45.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 47. “Communion ecclesiology” as it has developed since Vatican II manifests considerable diversity in Catholic ecclesiology (not to mention Orthodox and Protestant ecclesiology). Dennis Doyle, for example, lists six contemporary versions of Catholic communion ecclesiology: a CDF version, notable for its emphasis on the priority of the Church universal and the importance of certain visible church structures; a Rahnerian version, notable for its emphasis on the sacramentality of the world and on the communion with God that exists within all humankind; a Balthasarian version, notable for its emphasis on the uniqueness of Christian revelation and its aesthetic character; a liberation version, notable for its emphasis on the option for the poor and on the political implications of communion; a contextual version, notable for its emphasis on gender, ethnicity, and social location as the context for appreciating relationality; and a reforming version, notable for its emphasis on the need for Roman Catholics to challenge radically their own ecclesiological presuppositions in the interest of ecumenical progress. See Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 19. See also Franz Xaver Bea and Bern Jochen Hiberath, eds., *Communio: Ideal oder Zerrbild von Kommunikation?* Quaestiones Disputatae 176 (Freiburg: Herder, 1999).

<sup>154</sup> Citations from the documents of Vatican II are from Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*.

<sup>155</sup> See Francis Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In*, 56.

numerous bonds or elements, such as possession of the Spirit of Christ, profession of the catholic faith, celebration of the sacraments, and hierarchical communion with the ecclesiastical government of the Roman Catholic Church.

In *Unitatis Redintegratio* it is clear that non-Catholic Christians also share communion, albeit imperfectly, with the Catholic Church. Article three states that “those who believe in Christ and have been truly baptised are in some kind of communion with the catholic church, even though this communion is imperfect.” Likewise, *Lumen Gentium* #15 recognizes the many ways in which the Catholic Church is linked with other Christians and their communities: love for Scripture, faith in the Trinity and in Jesus Christ, common celebration of many of the sacraments along with a mutual sharing in the Holy Spirit are some of the links that Catholics share with the rest of non-Catholic Christianity.<sup>156</sup>

Cardinal Willebrands, commenting on the significance of the consideration of the church as a communion for the ecumenical movement, noted that this new ecclesiological paradigm provides much needed theological space for reevaluating the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities:

This communion or incorporation admits degrees and can be full and perfect or partial and imperfect in different ways, namely in its visible, institutional or in its

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<sup>156</sup> *Lumen Gentium* #15: “For several reasons the church recognises that it is joined to those who, though baptized and so honoured with the christian name, do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve the unity of communion under the successor of Peter. For there are many who hold sacred scripture in honour as the norm for believing and living, and display a sincere religious zeal. They lovingly believe in God the almighty Father and in Christ, the Son of God and saviour. They are marked by baptism, by which they are joined to Christ; and indeed there are other sacraments that they recognize and accept in their own churches or ecclesiastical communities. Several among them possess the episcopate, celebrate the sacred eucharist and foster devotion to the virgin mother of God. In addition to this, there is a communion in prayers and other spiritual benefits. Indeed there is a true bond in the Holy Spirit, since it is he who is also at work in these persons with his sanctifying power through gifts and graces, and he has strengthened some of them to the point of the shedding of their blood.”

invisible, spiritual aspect.... These ideas signify a new development of ecclesiological thinking and provide a basis for a new Catholic evaluation of the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic communities.<sup>157</sup>

The possibilities for reevaluating the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities based upon the communion ecclesiology of Vatican II was summarized by Johannes Feiner:

If the Church is seen as a *communio*...the unity of which has been brought about by numerous and various factors, the possibility remains open that constituent elements of the Church may be present even in Christian communities outside the Catholic Church, and may give these communities the nature of a Church.... If the Church were described...only in terms of the juridical concept of a *societas (perfecta)*, as has been done to an excessive and one-sided degree in Catholic theology for centuries, then the Church would cease once the limits of the Catholic community had been reached, and outside that, there would only be the 'non-Church.'<sup>158</sup>

Because the Council fathers were able to recognize in non-Catholic Christian communities many bonds that link Catholics with other Christians, they were led to reflect further on the ecclesial nature of these communities. In both *Lumen Gentium* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* are statements about the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities which significantly transcend what had been said about them prior to Vatican II. One statement in *Lumen Gentium*, however, is essential for understanding the Council's teaching on the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities and their relationship to the Catholic Church.

## 2.2 The Church "Subsists" in the Catholic Church

The second paragraph of Article 8 in *Lumen Gentium* describes the relationship of the one church of Christ to the Catholic Church:

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<sup>157</sup> Willebrands, "The Ecumenical Movement," 217-218.

<sup>158</sup> Johannes Feiner, "Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, vol. 2 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968): 57-164.

This is the unique church of Christ, which in the creed we profess to be one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.... This church, set up and organised in this world as a society, *subsists* in the catholic church, governed by the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him, although outside its structure many elements of sanctification and of truth are to be found which, as proper gifts to the church of Christ, impel towards catholic unity.<sup>159</sup>

According to Cardinal Willebrands, understanding how the word subsists (*subsistit*) defines the presence of the church of Christ in the Catholic Church is fundamental for understanding the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>160</sup>

In Willebrands' opinion the Council fathers intended no break with the doctrine of *Mystici Corporis* but rather were merely developing and deepening the thought of that encyclical.<sup>161</sup> As was shown above, both *Mystici Corporis* and *Humani Generis* had taught that the mystical body of Christ (i.e. the church of Christ) "is" the Roman Catholic Church. In *Lumen Gentium* #8, however, we read that the church of Christ "subsists" in the Roman Catholic Church. How is this change from "is" to "subsists in" to interpreted and understood? Is Cardinal Willebrands right that the Council fathers intended no radical break with the teachings of *Mystici Corporis* and *Humani Generis*? The meaning of this expression has been the source of much confusion and debate. Luis Bermejo said, "This expression of *Lumen Gentium* which immediately after the Council a competent commentator rightly foresaw would make the ink flow in torrents has not yet found a universally accepted interpretation."<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> *Lumen Gentium* #8. Emphasis mine.

<sup>160</sup> Cardinal Willebrands, "Vatican II's Ecclesiology of Communion," 27.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>162</sup> Luis Bermejo, *Infallibility on Trial: Church, Conciliarity and Communion* (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, Inc., 1993): 44. The commentator he refers to is Gérard Philips, the key author of *Lumen Gentium*.

Several commentators agree that there are at least two facts about this phrase that are certain. The first one is that the meaning of the expression ‘subsists in’ cannot be determined from the context of *Lumen Gentium* #8 alone. Cardinal Willebrands noted that “the meaning of the expression *subsistit* cannot be examined merely by considering *Lumen Gentium*. This is certainly the basic text but it was given further explanation in the decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*.”<sup>163</sup> Francis Sullivan, who has written perhaps more than any other theologian on this passage, concurs: “The first point I would make is that none of these questions can be given a satisfactory answer on the basis of this one text of *Lumen Gentium* alone.”<sup>164</sup> It is apparent then that proper interpretation of “subsists in” requires at the very least an examination of key passages in *Unitatis Redintegratio*.<sup>165</sup>

The second fact that several commentators agree on is that “the decision no longer to say ‘is’... is a decision no longer to assert such absolute and exclusive identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church....”<sup>166</sup> For example, Aloys Grillmeier, commenting on *Lumen Gentium* #8, wrote:

No absolute, exclusive judgment of identity is uttered such as the Church of Christ ‘is’ the Catholic Church. This...takes into account the concrete reality that ‘outside its structure many elements of sanctification and truth are to be found.’<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Willebrands, “Ecclesiology of Communion,” 28.

<sup>164</sup> Sullivan, “*Subsistit In*: The Significance of Vatican II’s Decision to Say of the Church of Christ not that it ‘is,’ but that it ‘subsists in’ the Roman Catholic Church,” *One in Christ* 22 (1986): 117.

<sup>165</sup> In this chapter I am only describing theological discussion of the proper interpretation of the conciliar statements themselves. In Chapter Two, I shall describe theological discussions of the various post-conciliar interpretations of “subsists in” made by the CDF. See Chapter Two, section 1.1, “Interpretation of ‘The Church of Christ Subsists in the Catholic Church,’” pages 89-96.

<sup>166</sup> Francis Sullivan, *Subsistit*, 116. See also Bermejo, *Infallibility on Trial*, 48-49: “The Council goes beyond the narrow identification between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church, embodied in the original *est*.”

<sup>167</sup> Aloys Grillmeier, “The Mystery of the Church,” in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, vol. 1 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967): 149-150.



Thus the whole of all “ecclesiality” does not simply coincide with the Catholic Church, because, as the fathers of the Council recognized, elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside of it. Furthermore, these elements or endowments have a truly ecclesial character. In summary, Sullivan noted that “the intention [of the Fathers] clearly was to continue to make a positive statement about the Catholic Church, but without the negative implication that the previous doctrine of exclusive identity had regarding the other churches.”<sup>168</sup>

Karl J. Becker, S.J., a consultor for the CDF since 1986 and professor emeritus of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, recently disagreed with the theologians cited above concerning *Lumen Gentium* #8. In 2005, Becker wrote a substantial article in the newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano* arguing that Vatican II intended to express, as the encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* and *Humani Generis* had done before the Council, the full and total identity of the church of Christ with the Catholic Church.<sup>169</sup> While he presents several arguments for his thesis, Becker’s most impressive one is that a careful search of the Vatican archives has revealed that it was none other than Fr. Sebastian Tromp (chief architect of Pius XII’s encyclical *Mystici Corporis*) who originally suggested the term “subsists in” for *Lumen Gentium* #8. Furthermore, Becker argues, it is clear that Tromp strongly insisted this term meant that the church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church in an exclusive way, such that outside it there are only elements of church. Francis Sullivan has written a convincing

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<sup>168</sup> Francis Sullivan, “The Impact of *Dominus Iesus* on Ecumenism,” *America*, 183, no. 13 (October 28, 2000): 8-11. Accessed online at <[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=2266](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2266)>.

<sup>169</sup> Karl Becker, “The Church and Vatican II’s ‘Subsistit in’ Terminology,” *Origins* 35, no. 31 (January 19, 2006): 514-22.

reply to Becker, in which he argues that while the doctrinal commission may have accepted Tromp's suggestion of "subsists in," it did not agree with his understanding of it.<sup>170</sup> After all, within the same draft in which the term "subsists in" appears, it is also stated for the first time that non-Catholic Christians receive and recognize some of the sacraments in their *own churches or ecclesial communities*.

Besides recognizing the existence outside the Catholic Church of ecclesial elements of truth and sanctification, several commentators see *Lumen Gentium* #8 as a positive affirmation of the historical and concrete presence of the one church of Christ in the Catholic Church. Thus, Grillmeier remarked:

There are two points which stand out [regarding the meaning of 'subsists in'].... The first is that the true and unique Church of Christ exists as a concrete fact of history. It is thus recognizable and definable in spite of all the character of mystery attached to it. The second is that the concrete form of existence of this Church founded by Christ is the Catholic Church.<sup>171</sup>

Walter Kasper also agrees that the term "subsists in" indicates that Christ's church is concretely found in the Catholic Church as opposed to being merely an idealistic or eschatological idea:

The notion of 'subsistit in' means...that Christ's church has its 'concrete place' in the Catholic Church; Christ's church is encountered in the Catholic Church, and it is there that she is to be concretely found. It is not a question of a purely platonic body or of a merely future reality; it exists concretely in history and is concretely found in the Catholic Church.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Francis Sullivan, "A Response to Karl Becker, S.J. on the Meaning of *subsistit in*," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 395-409. See also Sullivan, "The One Church in Current Ecclesiology," 5.

<sup>171</sup> Grillmeier, "The Mystery of the Church," 149-150.

<sup>172</sup> Kasper, "The Meaning and Impact of Vatican II's Ecumenism Decree," 447.

Finally, Richard Gaillardetz maintains that *subsistit* means that the church of Christ has always existed in history and continues to do so in the Catholic Church.<sup>173</sup>

### 2.3 *The Unique Presence of the Church of Christ in the Catholic Church*

As noted above, a considerable number of commentators recognize that the full meaning behind the phrase “subsists in” cannot be ascertained merely from the context in *Lumen Gentium* #8. The statement that “the church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church” means more than Christ’s church is always to be found in the Catholic Church to some degree. It also means that the church of Christ is present in the Catholic Church in a unique way. Gregory Baum said, “We can point with our finger to the Catholic Church and say, ‘This is the Church of Christ’, and according to Catholic faith we can do this to no other Christian body.”<sup>174</sup> By this he means that it is only in the Catholic Church that the authentic heritage of the doctrinal, sacramental and hierarchical gifts given by the Holy Spirit is fully preserved.<sup>175</sup>

It is precisely here that *Unitatis Redintegratio* is especially helpful for interpreting the meaning of “subsists in.” In fact, the only other relevant usage of “subsists” in the documents of Vatican II occurs in Article 4 of the decree: “We believe that [the unity which Christ bestowed on His church from the beginning] subsists in the catholic church as something she can never lose; and we cherish the hope that it will go on increasing until the end of time.” According to Article 3 of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, this fullness of unity is not found in non-Catholic Christian communities: “Nevertheless,

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<sup>173</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 71.

<sup>174</sup> Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches,” 39.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

our separated fellow Christians, whether considered as individuals or as communities and churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through him were born again into one body....”

Two other passages illustrate the mind of the Council concerning the unique presence of the church of Christ in the Catholic Church as compared with other Christian communities. Again in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #3, we read that “it is only through Christ’s catholic church, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be attained.” Article 4 says that the “catholic church has been endowed with all divinely revealed truth and with all means of grace....”

Francis Sullivan concludes that these statements in *Unitatis Redintegratio* clarify the meaning of the term “subsists in” in *Lumen Gentium* #8:

I believe we have a clear answer in the Decree on Ecumenism, to the question as to how the Council intends us to understand the statement that the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church. It means that the Church of Christ has continued and will continue to exist until the end of time with all its inalienable properties and with all the means of salvation with which Christ endowed it, and it is precisely in the Catholic Church that it continues so to exist.<sup>176</sup>

Cardinal Willebrands echoed this view of the unique presence of the church of Christ in the Catholic Church: “I would say that it is in the Catholic Church that the whole of what the Lord Jesus Christ has given to his people, to enable them to constitute the community of grace willed by the Father, is transmitted and kept so that it cannot be lost.”<sup>177</sup> In an earlier article he also wrote, “These gifts [of Christ] are given in fullness to the Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church. This means that they are present in her and

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<sup>176</sup> Sullivan, “*Subsistit*,” 119.

<sup>177</sup> Willebrands, “Ecclesiology of Communion,” 31.

belong to her in their totality.”<sup>178</sup> Thus, like Sullivan, Willebrands understands the statement “the Church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church” to mean that Christ’s church continues to exist in the Catholic Church with all its original endowments intact.

#### 2.4 *The Institutional Wholeness of the Catholic Church*

It is often very difficult for non-Catholics to avoid interpreting such statements about the unique presence of Christ’s church in the Catholic Church as exclusive or outright arrogant. A number of Catholic commentators, however, seem acutely aware of how this interpretation appears and are quick to qualify how such a unique presence of Christ’s church in the Catholic Church is to be understood. They point out that these statements about the “superiority” of the Catholic Church over other Christian communities are only to be taken from a particular aspect or angle, namely, the institutional aspect of the church. Feiner, in his commentary on *Unitatis Redintegratio*, expressed very well what the institutional wholeness of the Roman Catholic Church means and does not mean for the conciliar fathers:

The decree compares the Catholic Church to non-Catholic Churches and communities from an institutional point of view, and emphasizes the importance of the institutional elements of the Church for the unity of the Church and for the building up of the (visible) body of Christ. It is from this point of view that ‘fullness’ is predicated of the Catholic Church: in it alone are the means of salvation willed by Christ available in their totality.... *Plenitudo* in no sense signifies the perfection of the Church’s institutions, far less a perfect equivalence between the visible institution and either the inner, spiritual gifts of salvation, or the Church’s state of grace and sanctity. The plenitude which the decree accords the Catholic Church therefore signifies wholeness, totality, the ‘whole gamut,’ completeness (of the visible elements of the Church).<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Willebrands, “The Ecumenical Movement,” 220.

<sup>179</sup> Feiner, “Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree,” 79.

Baum likewise described the unfailing perfection of the Catholic Church as the authentic heritage of the doctrinal, sacramental and hierarchical gifts that the Holy Spirit preserves within her.<sup>180</sup> It is only in regard to the presence or absence of these gifts that the Catholic Church is seen as the perfect realization of the church of Christ and other Christian communities as imperfect realizations of the same church.<sup>181</sup> Willebrands, on the other hand, prefers to speak of the totality of gifts given to the Catholic Church, but notes that it does not follow that their mere presence means that they are perfectly realized in her.<sup>182</sup> Sullivan makes an excellent distinction between the presence of the institutional means of salvation and the extent to which they are realized in the life of the community:

Of course it must be kept in mind that this is a question of institutional integrity...to put it another way, we are talking about the Church as *sacramentum*, not as *res sacramenti*.... The means of grace have to be used well to achieve their full effect, and the possession of a fullness of means is no guarantee of how well they will be used.<sup>183</sup>

In summary, while many commentators see in the phrase “the church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church” an affirmation of the fullness of the means of grace and salvation and the presence of all divinely revealed truth, it does not follow that these various endowments have always been used well by the Catholic Church throughout its history or that they are perfectly realized within the Catholic Church at the present time.

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<sup>180</sup> Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches,” 39.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 42

<sup>182</sup> Willebrands, “The Ecumenical Movement,” 220.

<sup>183</sup> Sullivan, “*Subsistit*,” 120.

Likewise, there is no connotation of moral superiority or sinlessness in the claim that the church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church.<sup>184</sup>

## 2.5 *Additional Aspects of Vatican II Ecclesiology*

In this next section I shall discuss three additional aspects of Vatican II ecclesiology that are important for the case I am making in this dissertation: 1) the effect of division on the unity of the church; 2) the understanding of the Catholic Church as a communion of local churches; and 3) the eucharistic ecclesiology of the Council.

### 2.5.1 *The Effect of Division on the Church's Unity*

Another important aspect of the ecclesiology of Vatican II for this dissertation is the Council's teaching on the fact of division in the present state of Christianity and its implications for understanding the unity of the one church of Christ which subsists in the Catholic Church. In *Unitatis Redintegratio* #3 we read:

Even in the beginnings of this one and only church of God there arose certain rifts.... But in subsequent centuries much more extensive dissensions made their appearance and large communities came to be separated from the full communion of the catholic church—for which, often enough, people of both sides were to blame.

Speaking about the unity of non-Catholic Christian churches and ecclesial communities, the text goes on to say: “Nevertheless, our separated fellow Christians, whether considered as individuals or as communities and churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those who through him were born again into one body....” Thus, according to *Unitatis Redintegratio*, division between the Catholic

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<sup>184</sup> In fact, Catholic theologians such as Karl Rahner emphasize the sinfulness of the church as a truth of faith rather than merely a fact of experience. See Karl Rahner, “The Church of Sinners,” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 6 (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1969): 260.

Church and other Christian communities damages the full communion between them. In addition, the unity which Christ bestowed on his Church is wounded in those communities that are separated from the Catholic Church in which that unity subsists and can never be lost.

What does this teaching mean for faith in the church of Christ as one? One possibility is that the church of Christ is a collection of churches which are divided but which maintain a certain kind of invisible unity, similar to the branch theory of the universal church rejected by the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century. In this perspective the Catholic Church would be the most complete or exemplary church from an institutional perspective. Other Christian communities would be part of the one church of Christ but defective from an institutional point of view. This opinion, however, seems inconsistent with the overall approach of the Council. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, for one, believes such an idea would make the unity of the church of Christ a human achievement:

The Catholic tradition, as it has been restated by the Second Vatican Council, is not characterized by the idea that all existing 'Churchdoms' are merely fragments of a true Church which does not exist anywhere but which one must now try to form by putting all these fragments together; this kind of idea would turn the Church into purely the work of man.<sup>185</sup>

How then are we to think about division in the present state of Christianity according to the ecclesiology of Vatican II? Feiner, commenting on the text of *Unitatis Redintegratio* quoted above, explained it as follows:

It must first be noted that [the text] does not speak of the division of the one Church of Christ into several Churches, but of the separation of quite large

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<sup>185</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics* (New York: Crossroad, 1988): 120.



communities from the Catholic Church. This is in accordance with the conviction of the Catholic faith that the Church of Christ, in spite of the divisions, has not ceased to have a continued existence in the Catholic Church, as the concrete form of its existence. But separation from the Catholic Church does not signify that separated communities simply cease to be Churches. The final text states that these divisions do not involve a complete and total separation from the Catholic Church. The separation is not total, and unity is not radically destroyed, but a certain link between the separated communities and the Catholic Church persists.<sup>186</sup>

Thus, in Feiner's estimation, the ecclesiology of the Council did not teach that a division of the church of Christ occurred in the past but rather describes the separation of various Christian communities from full communion with the Catholic Church in which the one church of Christ subsists throughout history. Cardinal Willebrands voiced agreement with this proposition: "Catholic ecclesiology would strictly and properly speaking not admit a division of the Church though it admits and acknowledges the division of Christians. Wherever gifts of the Spirit, institutional or spiritual, exist, they are elements and forces of communion."<sup>187</sup> For Willebrands, even in the situation of division, Christian communities are never completely independent of one another because it is the same Spirit of Christ working in all and through all.<sup>188</sup>

### *2.5.2 The Catholic Church as a Communion of Local Churches*

Thus far I have described how the Council recognized the existence of genuine ecclesiality outside the Catholic Church while also making several unique ecclesiological claims about itself. I have also explained how the Council understands the effects of the separation of various Christian communities on the unity of the church. Before

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<sup>186</sup> Feiner, "Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree," 70-71.

<sup>187</sup> Willebrands, "The Ecumenical Movement," 222-223.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 221.

considering in greater detail the Council's teaching on the ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christian communities, it is necessary to briefly describe how the Council's ecclesiology understands the constitutive features of ecclesiality in the Catholic Church.

Joseph Komonchak notes that for centuries Catholic ecclesiology developed in a universalistic perspective which produced a vision of the universal church that was highly centralized and uniform.<sup>189</sup> In this view, local dioceses were often viewed as mere administrative subunits of the universal church. Bishops were often seen as vicars or delegates of the pope rather than vicars of Christ.<sup>190</sup> At Vatican II this trend was significantly reversed. Instead of understanding the church as a universal corporation or organization, the Council returned to an ancient vision of the universal church as a communion of local churches.<sup>191</sup> In this understanding of the universal church, "Local churches were not 'branch offices' of some corporate superstructure; they were unique manifestations of communion within the one church of Christ."<sup>192</sup>

*Lumen Gentium* #23 states that while local churches are modeled on the universal church, it is in and from these local or particular churches that there "comes into being the one and only Catholic Church."<sup>193</sup> Komonchak believes this statement contains one of the most important teachings of Vatican II:

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<sup>189</sup> Joseph Komonchak, "The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology," in *The Gift of the Church*, 80.

<sup>190</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 62.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>193</sup> It should be noted, however, that not all agree with this understanding of the relationship of the local church to the universal church. Joseph Ratzinger, for one, has argued that the universal church is ontologically prior to the local churches. In fact, Walter Kasper has publicly challenged Ratzinger's understanding of this relationship. See Kilian McDonnell, "The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and Local Churches," *Theological Studies* 60, no. 2 (June 2002): 227–50.

On the one hand, the individual churches are said to be ‘formed in the image of the universal Church;’ on the other, this latter is said to exist ‘in and out of’ the individual churches. From the first statement it is clear that the individual local churches are not something distinct from the universal Church but represent it, realize it, bear its image in the sense that what makes the one Church the Church makes them churches. From the second statement it is clear that the universal Church is not something distinct from the individual churches but exists only in them and out of them....<sup>194</sup>

Likewise, Gaillardetz describes the interpenetration of the universal church and the local church in the following manner, “There is no access to, or experience of, the universal church except within a local church. Conversely, there is no participation in a local church that is not, at some level, also a communion with the church universal.”<sup>195</sup> The essence of a local church’s ecclesiality, therefore, consists in its ability to represent, realize and make present the one and only Catholic Church.

### *2.5.3 The Council’s Eucharistic Ecclesiology*

According to Richard Gaillardetz, central to the recovery by the Council of an ancient theology of the local church was its retrieval of a eucharistic ecclesiology.<sup>196</sup> As shown above, this recovery was substantially initiated through the work of ecclesialogists such as Henri de Lubac before Vatican II. The documents of the Council make clear in numerous places that it is in the celebration of the Eucharist together with its bishop that the local church is principally manifested and realized. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #41 says “the church is displayed with special clarity when the holy people of God, all of them, are actively and fully sharing in the same liturgical celebrations—especially when it is the same eucharist—sharing one prayer at one altar, at which the bishop is presiding,

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<sup>194</sup> Komonchak, “The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology,” 81-2.

<sup>195</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 65.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 63.

surrounded by his presbyterate and his ministers.” *Lumen Gentium* #26 also states that it is in local eucharistic communities that Christ is made present through whose power the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church is constituted:

The bishop, marked with the fullness of the sacrament of order, is ‘the steward of the grace of the supreme priesthood,’ especially in the eucharist which he offers or which he ensures is offered, and by which the church continuously lives and grows. This church of Christ is truly present in all lawful organized local congregations of the faithful which, united to their shepherds, are themselves called churches in the New Testament.... In these communities, although frequently small and poor, or dispersed, Christ is present by whose power the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church is gathered together.

In a similar vein, *Christus Dominus* #11 states that in each diocese the preaching of the gospel and the celebration of the Eucharist makes the universal church present and active in the local community:

A diocese is a section of the people of God whose pastoral care is entrusted to a bishop in cooperation with his priests. Thus, in conjunction with their pastor and gathered by him into one flock in the holy Spirit through the gospel and the eucharist, they constitute a particular church. In this church, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Christ is truly present and at work.

Finally, *Unitatis Redintegratio* #15 describes the effects of the celebration of the Eucharist in the Eastern churches. It says “through the celebration of the holy eucharist in each of these churches, the church of God is built up....” In all of these texts “the particular, necessarily local, eucharistic assembly is described as an event of the one and catholic Church, whose whole mystery, generated out of the word of God and the sacrament, is realized there.”<sup>197</sup>

Before moving on to a consideration of the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities, it is important to remember that the aim of this study is to consider ways in

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<sup>197</sup> Komonchak, “The Significance of Vatican Council II for Ecclesiology,” 81.

which “ecclesial fruitfulness” might serve as a standard for judging whether a Christian community is a genuine “church” in the theological sense. If, as I have suggested, the essence of ecclesial reality derives from the celebration of the Eucharist, then it is important to note what Vatican II considered to be the primary effects of a eucharistic celebration in which the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery is present.

*Lumen Gentium* describes the fruits of the Eucharist in several places. Article seven describes how the Eucharist deepens communion with Christ and with those who partake of the one bread:

When we really participate in the body of the Lord through the breaking of the eucharistic bread, we are raised up to communion with him and among ourselves. ‘Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’ (1 Cor 10, 17). In this way all of us are made members of his body (see 1 Cor 12, 27), ‘individually members one of another’ (Rm 12, 5).

Article eleven describes the fruit of the Eucharist as follows: “Indeed, refreshed as they are by the body of Christ in the sacred gathering [of the Eucharist], [the faithful] show forth in a concrete way the unity of the people of God, which in this most noble sacrament is both suitably symbolized and wonderfully brought about.” Commenting on this passage, Aloys Grillmeier wrote: “The Constitution affirms that the unity of the people of God is aptly signified and marvelously effected by this most august sacrament. We may no doubt deduce from this that incorporation into the unity of the mystical body is the primary effect of the Eucharist and the instrumental cause of all other effects.”<sup>198</sup> Finally, article twenty-six describes the effect of the Eucharist by quoting St. Leo the Great: “Participation in the body and blood of Christ has no other effect than to make us

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<sup>198</sup> Grillmeier, “The Mystery of the Church,” 161.

pass over into what we are consuming.” In summary, the Council teaches that the ecclesial fruit of a local Christian community which celebrates a true Eucharist will be: a deepening of communion with Christ and with one another; further incorporation into the mystical body of the Lord; and a concrete manifestation of the unity of the people of God.

Given this overview of the ecclesiology of Vatican II and its understanding of the nature of ecclesiality in the Catholic Church, we are now ready to address the question: how does the Council understand the ecclesiality of other Christian communities? It has already been shown from a purely negative point of view that these communities are seen as institutionally imperfect realizations of the one church of Christ. Division has wounded the fullness of communion between these communities and the Catholic Church in which the one church of Christ subsists. In addition, because of this separation, these communities do not possess that unity which Christ wished to bestow on those who have been born into the body of Christ. Seen from this point of view, the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council hardly seems very ecumenical. Yet this is not a complete picture of the Council’s teaching on the ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities. The conciliar fathers were able to make numerous positive affirmations about the ecclesial reality of these communities.

## *2.6 The Ecclesial Reality of Non-Catholic Christian Communities*

In what follows I shall first describe the importance of Vatican II’s affirmation that non-Catholic Christian communities possess many “ecclesial elements” that serve as the foundation of their genuine ecclesiality. I shall then bring to light some common

criticisms theologians have raised regarding the Council's use of this term. Finally, I shall explain the Council's two-fold use of "churches" and "ecclesial communities" as applied to non-Catholic Christian communities.

### *2.6.1 Ecclesial Elements in Non-Catholic Christian Communities*

As noted above, *Lumen Gentium* #15 described the many bonds that link Catholics with other Christians. *Unitatis Redintegratio* #3 illuminates more clearly their significance for the ecclesial reality of these communities:

Moreover, some, and even most, of the significant elements and endowments which together go to build up and give life to the church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the catholic church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, with the other interior gifts of the holy Spirit, and visible elements too. All of these, coming from Christ and leading back to Christ, properly belong to the one church of Christ.

Commenting on this text, Johannes Feiner noted "these endowments, values and realities, which are essential constituents of the Church, are referred to as (ecclesial) elements.

The Decree sees in non-Catholic communities essential structural elements of the Church.

And in such communities it even recognizes 'very many of the most significant

elements.'"<sup>199</sup> Moreover, the same text refers to these elements and endowments in non-

Catholic Christian communities as "riches of Christ"<sup>200</sup> and recognizes that the Spirit uses

these separated communities as the means of salvation for their members.<sup>201</sup> Thus, the

ecclesial reality of non-Catholic Christian communities is "constituted by the existence of

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<sup>199</sup> Feiner, "Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree," 74-75.

<sup>200</sup> "On the other hand, Catholics must gladly acknowledge and esteem the truly christian endowments which derive from our common heritage and which are to be found among our separated brothers and sisters. It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and the virtuous deeds in the lives of others who bear witness to Christ, even at times to the shedding of their blood," *Unitatis Redintegratio* #4.

<sup>201</sup> "For the Spirit of Christ has not refrained from using [the separated churches and communities] as means of salvation whose efficacy comes from that fullness of grace and truth which has been entrusted to the Catholic Church," *Unitatis Redintegratio* #3.

the true benefits of Christ's foundation which have been preserved in spite of [the] separation [between non-Catholic Christian communities and the Catholic Church].”<sup>202</sup>

Feiner noted further:

In so far as these endowments are the same as can also be found in the Catholic Church, they are not the basis of division, and do not serve to build up communities as Churches separate from the Catholic Church.... In other words, the same elements which within the limits of the Catholic community build up the Church of Christ, also serve outside these limits to build up the very same Church of Christ.<sup>203</sup>

Not only do such ecclesial elements serve to build up the one church of Christ in non-Catholic Christian communities, they are the basis of communion between such communities and the Catholic Church.

In summary, the Council taught that elements of Christ's church are found in these non-Catholic Christian communities. These elements build up the one church of Christ; serve as the objective basis for communion with the Catholic Church; and are the means of salvation for their members. The conciliar fathers reasoned, therefore, that because of the presence of such elements these communities have a truly ecclesial character, and thus, as the title of Chapter Three in the Decree on Ecumenism indicates, it is legitimate to speak of them as non-Catholic “Churches and Ecclesial Communities Separated from the Roman Apostolic See.”<sup>204</sup>

### *2.6.2 Criticism of the “Ecclesiology of Elements”*

One major criticism of this “ecclesiology of elements” propounded by the Council has been that such an understanding is too quantitative, as if the church of Christ could

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<sup>202</sup> Grillmeier, “The Mystery of the Church,” 149-150.

<sup>203</sup> Feiner, “Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree,” 74-75.

<sup>204</sup> I shall discuss the Council's distinction between “churches” and “ecclesial communities” in greater detail below in the section, “Separated Churches and Ecclesial Communities.”



adequately be described by enumerating on a checklist of all the various items that constitute a church. Protestants in particular have frequently criticized *Unitatis Redintegratio* for describing the church too much in terms of a juxtaposition and conglomeration of various ecclesial elements without regard for their indivisible wholeness.<sup>205</sup> A similar criticism was even voiced in the second session of the Council by Archbishop Andrea Pangrazio of Gorizia, Italy:

It is a good thing to list all these elements of the Church which by God's grace have been preserved in communities and continue to produce saving effects. But to express my honest opinion, it seems to me that such a catalogue is too 'quantitative'.... It seems to me that these elements have simply been piled together. I believe that a bond is needed to unite these separate elements. We therefore point to the centre, to which all these elements are related, and without which they cannot be explained. This bond and centre is Christ himself...who accomplishes wonderful things even in separated communities by his active presence through the Holy Spirit, not by any merit of men but by his gracious mercy alone.<sup>206</sup>

Another criticism raised against this "ecclesiology of elements" is that the Council evaluated the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities according to the degree that these communities resemble the Catholic Church. Baum raised this issue, saying, "The impression is created that the Catholic Church regards herself as the perfect Church and makes herself the measure of all the other Christian communities. The closer they resemble the Catholic Church, the more truly do they deserve name of Church."<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Feiner, "Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree," 80-1. For an example of a Protestant theologian critical of the "ecclesiology of elements" in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, see Harding Meyer, "The Decree on Ecumenism. A Protestant Viewpoint," *The Ecumenical Review* 57 (1985): 324. Feiner also cites as an example, W. Dantine, "Die kontroverstheologische Problematik der sogenannten 'Ekklesialen Elemente' im Blick auf das ökumenische Gespräch," in J. Lell, ed., *Erneuerung der Einen Kirche. Arbeiten aus Kirchengeschichte und Konfessionskunde* (1966): 140-54.

<sup>206</sup> Baum, "The Ecclesial Reality of the Other Churches," 40-41.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

Luigi Sartori also commented on these limitations in *Lumen Gentium* #8, which are based on the Council's "ecclesiology of elements":

Everything is seen from the point of view of a quantitative comparison; the totality and completeness are measured almost wholly on the basis of the material number of the elements: in the Roman Church there are all the elements one hundred percent; in the other churches only a certain higher or lower percentage. This does not take into account that the mystery, even in its historical dimension, is intrinsically spiritual and of a qualitative order.<sup>208</sup>

In an insightful critique of the Council's "ecclesiology of elements," Sartori noted that *Lumen Gentium* #8 makes the mere presence of these elements a more decisive indicator of the ecclesial reality of a church than the degree to which these elements are experienced and operating in the community. It is, he wrote, "as if it were sufficient to preserve them and to keep them at our disposal (like food inside the refrigerator and not on the table or like money inside a safe or in a bank, money that we do not invest)."<sup>209</sup>

Other commentators, however, argue that this criticism of the Council's ecclesiology is not entirely justified. Speaking of *Lumen Gentium* #8, Cardinal Willebrands argued that the concept of "ecclesial elements" needs to be put in its larger context:

In the conscience of the bishops the chief reason inducing the commission to adopt *subsistit in* seems to have been a reflection on the depth of the mystery of grace.... The idea of the 'elements of the church,' ...was viewed in this perspective of the mystery of grace. It is important to make this clear. It shows that the change from *est* to *subsistit in* has a bearing far beyond the strictly institutional. It has to do with grasping the implications of belonging to Christ. The standpoint is not

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<sup>208</sup> Luigi Sartori, "'Subsistit in' Criterion of 'Truth and History' in Interreligious Dialogue," in *In Many and Diverse Ways: In Honor of Jacques Dupuis*, eds. Daniel Kendall, Gerald O'Collins and Jacques Dupuis (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003): 89.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

juridical but Christological. The problem of *subsistit in* cannot be properly understood from any other standpoint.<sup>210</sup>

In addition to a proper appreciation of the Christological context in which the mention of “ecclesial elements” is made, Willebrands also rejected the view that the terminology of “elements” is merely about an enumeration of quantifiable elements found in the church. According to him these elements “indicate spiritual realities like faith, hope and charity, or sacraments, or institutions which are more than merely human and historical creations. They are realities which are not quantitatively measurable.”<sup>211</sup>

Sartori, despite his criticism of *Lumen Gentium* #8, also found *Lumen Gentium*’s ecclesiology to be set in a more Christological context:

But shortly afterwards (in [*Lumen Gentium*] 15) we begin to move significantly beyond [a quantitative comparison]. The point of view is decidedly Christological. Rather than the measurable quantity of ecclesial elements present elsewhere, their intrinsic characteristics are important. Hence [*Lumen Gentium*] takes care to underline the highest, primary, and most fundamental goods....<sup>212</sup>

Here Sartori’s emphasized that what is important about these “ecclesial elements” is “the end of the subjective moment,” i.e. the “real life of people, who on that basis of those values [present in the objective ‘elements’ of the church] are raised to bear the precious fruit of a genuine faith and even witness the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit to the point of martyrdom.”<sup>213</sup>

### 2.6.3 *Separated Churches and Ecclesial Communities*

As I mentioned previously, both *Lumen Gentium* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* described non-Catholic Christian communities by using the two-fold phrase “churches

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<sup>210</sup> Willebrands, “Ecclesiology of Communion,” 29.

<sup>211</sup> Willebrands, “The Ecumenical Movement,” 219-220.

<sup>212</sup> Sartori, “‘*Subsistit in*’ Criterion of ‘Truth and History’ in Interreligious Dialogue,” 89.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

and ecclesial communities.”<sup>214</sup> An important hermeneutical question is whether Vatican II intended to make a strict categorical distinction between “churches” and other “ecclesial communities” based upon whether or not a particular community has preserved the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery through the sacrament of order.

*Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 stated:

Though the ecclesial communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us which flows from baptism, and though we believe they have not retained the authentic and full reality of the eucharistic mystery, especially because the sacrament of order is lacking [*defectum sacramenti ordinis*], nevertheless when they commemorate his death and resurrection in the Lord's Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and look forward to his coming in glory.<sup>215</sup>

Commenting on this passage, Francis Sullivan concludes, “It is evident that the council judged the presence of ‘the genuine and total reality of the Eucharistic mystery’ so essential to the full reality of the church that it preferred not to use the term ‘church’ of communities that, ‘because of the lack of the sacrament of orders,’ had not preserved the Eucharist.”<sup>216</sup> Furthermore, in his 2010 article, “‘Ecclesial Communities’ and their ‘*Defectus Sacramenti Ordinis*,’” Sullivan maintains, “the distinction between ‘churches’ and ‘ecclesial communities’ is based on theological grounds, and specifically, on the

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<sup>214</sup> See *Lumen Gentium* #15, the title of Chapter Three in *Unitatis Redintegratio* and the title of part two of the same chapter for examples.

<sup>215</sup> I have added the original Latin because its English translation is disputed. The dispute concerns whether this phrase means “a complete absence of the sacrament of orders” or rather “a lack of fullness in the sacrament of orders.” I shall address how theologians since Vatican II have interpreted this phrase in Chapter Two. For now, I want only to examine the question of whether the Council intended to positively say that those ecclesial communities which possess the *defectus* described in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 are not theologically churches. Whether that *defectus* be a complete absence of sacramental orders or merely a lack of fullness in sacramental orders is another question.

<sup>216</sup> Sullivan, “The Impact of *Dominus Iesus* on Ecumenism.” Accessed online at <[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=2266](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2266)>.

presence or absence of the valid sacrament of orders and valid Eucharist.”<sup>217</sup> The conclusion drawn, therefore, is that Vatican II intended to designate as “churches” in the theological sense only those Christian communities with valid sacramental orders and a valid Eucharist. In addition, it is also argued that the Council also specifically intended to teach that non-Catholic Christian communities that lack a valid Eucharist because of a *defectum sacramenti ordinis* (UR 22) are not theologically churches and as such should be designated as “ecclesial communities.” I hope to show, however, that this latter conclusion is unwarranted.

What are the reasons for holding that Vatican II intended to teach that “ecclesial communities,” because of a *defectum sacramenti ordinis*, are not theologically churches? Sullivan cites from the *relationes* of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU) that explained to the bishops of the Council the use of the two-fold expression “churches and ecclesial communities” in the Decree on Ecumenism. Responding to those who had concerns about the title of Chapter Three, “Churches and Ecclesial Communities Separated from the Roman Apostolic See,” the Secretariat wrote:

The two-fold expression ‘Churches and ecclesial communities’ has been approved by the Council, and is used in a completely legitimate way. There is indeed only one universal Church, but there are many local and particular churches. It is customary in Catholic tradition to call the separated Eastern communities churches—local or particular ones to be sure—and in the proper sense of the term.<sup>218</sup>

In this *relatio* it is clear that there are indeed non-Catholic communities that are ‘churches’ in the theological sense, particularly the separated churches of the East, but

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<sup>217</sup> Francis Sullivan, “‘Ecclesial Communities’ and their ‘*Defectus Sacramenti Ordinis*,’” *Ecumenical Trends* 39, no. 3 (March 2010): 6.

<sup>218</sup> *Acta Synodalia* III/7, 35. Cited in Sullivan, “Ecclesial Communities,” 6.

the Secretariat does not specify the theological basis for designating them as such, saying only that it is customary to do so. However, the *relatio* written to explain the title of part two of Chapter Three in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, “Separated churches and ecclesial communities in the West,” does reveal the criterion on which the Secretariat designates certain Christian communities to be churches in the theological sense:

It is to be noted that among the separated communities [in the West] there are some, namely the Old Catholics, which, like the Orthodox communities, should be called churches, according to sound theological doctrine admitted by all Catholics, in view of the valid sacrament of orders and valid Eucharist which they possess. On the other hand, there are some groups of Christians who themselves reject the name church.<sup>219</sup>

Hence, the Secretariat gives the theological rationale on which the Eastern Orthodox and Old Catholic communities are designated ‘churches’: namely the fact that they possess the valid sacrament of order and a valid Eucharist. Furthermore, this *relatio* of the Secretariat does suggest that certain communities that have their origin in the separation in the West, while possessing true ecclesiality, nevertheless are only analogous to genuine particular “churches”:

It must not be overlooked that the communities that have their origin in the separation that took place in the West are not merely a sum or collection of individual Christians, but they are constituted by social ecclesiastical elements which they have preserved from our common patrimony, and which confer on them a truly ecclesial character. In these communities the one sole Church of Christ is present, albeit imperfectly, in a way that is somewhat like its presence in particular churches, and by means of their ecclesiastical elements the Church of Christ is in some way operative in them.<sup>220</sup>

Thus the Secretariat recognized that not all Christian communities were churches in the theological sense, though one should note that this *relatio* did not explicitly identify

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<sup>219</sup> *Acta Synodalia* III/2, 335. Cited in Sullivan, “Ecclesial Communities,” 6.

<sup>220</sup> *Acta Synodalia* III/2, 335. Cited in Francis A. Sullivan, “A Response to Karl Becker, S.J. on the Meaning of *subsistit in*,” 406.

“ecclesial communities” as those Christian communities having invalid Eucharist and orders.

But does not the fact that the Secretariat designated the Old Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communities as “churches” because they have preserved a valid Eucharist and valid orders imply that it taught that ecclesial communities are those Christian communities, which because of the *defectum sacramenti ordinis*, are not “churches” in the theological sense? After all, Sullivan notes that in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22, it is only said of “ecclesial communities” (not “churches and ecclesial communities”) that they have a *defectus* in the sacrament of order.<sup>221</sup> I believe, however, that this overstates the Council’s intention. One reason is that the Secretariat, in the same *relatio* on the title of Chapter Three of the Decree on Ecumenism, explicitly stated, “It is not the business of the Council to determine which among the other communities [i.e. the separated Western communities] should be called Churches in the theological sense.”<sup>222</sup> Clearly, then, the Secretariat was not making a judgment that the Old Catholic Church, because of their possession of a valid Eucharist and sacramental orders, was necessarily the only “church” among the separated communities of the West. But perhaps the Secretariat simply meant the Council had no intention of deciding which other separated communities in the West had a valid Eucharist and valid sacramental orders, and should be designated as “churches” accordingly? Again, there is good reason to think the Secretariat wanted to leave more than this question open. In another *relatio* on the title of Chapter Three in the Decree on Ecumenism, the Secretariat clearly says, “Speaking in the title of churches and

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<sup>221</sup> See Sullivan, “Ecclesial Communities,” 6.

<sup>222</sup> *Acta Synodalia* III/7, 35. Cited in Sullivan, “A Response to Karl Becker,” 14-15.

ecclesial communities, we intend to include all those which are honored with the name Christian, but *by no means do we go into the disputed question as to what is required that a Christian community can be called theologically a church.*”<sup>223</sup>

Indeed several commentators believe the Council decided to leave open the question of whether Christian communities lacking a valid Eucharist and valid sacramental orders were genuine churches or not. For example, Feiner wrote:

Whether the concept ‘Church’, in the theological sense, can also be applied if the Episcopal ministry with apostolic succession is not (or not certainly) present, and where only some of the sacraments are recognized, as in the case in the Reformation Churches, was the subject of a difference of opinion among the Council Fathers.<sup>224</sup>

Avery Dulles also concurred:

Without stating that there were, in the proper theological sense, any Protestant Churches, the Council did not deny this. Rather, it left the whole question open by referring to ‘the Separated Churches and Ecclesial Communities in the West.’ Did the Council mean that all except certain non-Protestant bodies, such as the Old Catholic Church, were merely ‘ecclesial communities’? This interpretation would be quite consistent with everything the Council says, but it is not the only interpretation. It seems better to say that the Council deliberately left the question open.<sup>225</sup>

While Gaillardetz argues that the Council wished to leave open the particular question of the status of orders and the Eucharist in individual non-Catholic Christian communions, he likewise believes that the Council’s intention was not to restrict the use of the term “church” only to those communities with valid Eucharist and ministry:

It was the intention of the council to affirm in a positive way the genuine ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christian communities rather than to insist on a restrictive use of the term ‘church.’ In part, the conjoining of the two terms, ‘churches’ and ‘ecclesial communities,’ was proposed in sensitivity to the fact

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<sup>223</sup> *Acta Synodalia* III/4, 13-4. Cited in Sullivan, “Ecclesial Communities,” 6. Emphasis mine.

<sup>224</sup> Feiner, “Decree on Ecumenism: Commentary on the Decree,” 77.

<sup>225</sup> Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 143.



that most Protestant traditions in the West did not refer to their various worldwide memberships as if they were single ‘churches,’ preferring terms like ‘communion,’ ‘federation’ or ‘alliance.’<sup>226</sup>

Gaillardetz makes this claim by citing an October 2000 address of Father John Hotchkin to the Canon Law Society of America. In that address Hotchkin said:

[The above mentioned Protestant] traditions restrict the name *church* to regional or nationally based particular churches or in some cases to the local congregations, and some such as the Society of Friends simply—or should I say with accustomed simplicity?—tend not to use it, either with respect to their meetings or the meetinghouses. Since many of these world bodies were represented in the *aula* of St. Peter’s Basilica by their own designated observers, this fact could not be overlooked as a mere terminological difference. It reflected their ecclesiological self-understanding. So to cover this span of meanings *ecclesiae et communitates ecclesiales* was coined.<sup>227</sup>

Hotchkin also argues the Council did not intend by the two-fold phrase, “churches and ecclesial communities,” to systematically describe two different types of Christian communities. In the same address, Hotchkin argued:

It would be a mistake, I am convinced, to read [the phrasing ‘churches and ecclesial communities’] as a clear and sharp distinction between two different kinds of entities. There is a tendency among some, I think, to try to do so. In this tendency the term *churches* would be ascribed to those who have retained...’the genuine and integral substance of the eucharistic mystery....’

On the other hand, the tendency I am describing would attribute the term *ecclesial communities* to those communities who have not preserved the eucharistic mystery, ‘especially because of a defect of the sacrament of orders.’<sup>228</sup>

Furthermore, Hotchkin argued that the reason only “ecclesial communities” (not “churches and ecclesial communities”) are mentioned in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 as not having preserved the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery is not

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<sup>226</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 118.

<sup>227</sup> John Hotchkin, “Canon Law and Ecumenism: Giving Shape to the Future,” *Origins* 30, no. 19 (October 19, 2000): 294.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 29. Emphasis original.

because the Council wanted to restrict the designation of “church” but exactly for the opposite reason. Citing Jerome Hamer, former secretary of the SPCU during the development of the Decree on Ecumenism, Hotchkin said:

Here [in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22] we find only the terminology *ecclesial communities* separated from us, not *churches and ecclesial communities*. Why so? Hamer answers that the council did so precisely because it did not wish to prejudice or definitively pronounce on the ordained ministries of those Protestant communities in which it perceived this possible deficiency or defect by stating that they were nonetheless *churches* in the full theological sense of the word. The council did not wish to pre-empt this question, but to leave it open.<sup>229</sup>

In summary, Vatican II intended to teach that it is appropriate to designate all non-Catholic Christian communities that are known to have a valid Eucharist and possess the sacrament of order (such as the separated churches of the East and the Old Catholic Church) as “churches” in the theological sense. Yet the Council also left open the question of which of the other separated Christian communities possess a valid Eucharist and did not settle the question of what is required theologically for a Christian community to be called a “church.” Vatican II seemed content to teach that possession of a valid Eucharist and valid sacramental orders is *sufficient* to be deemed a church, without saying that it is absolutely *necessary*. The Council preferred to leave this as an open question.

In the nearly 465 years since the beginning of the Council of Trent, we have seen the Catholic Church move from a position of total denial of genuine ecclesiality in Protestant communities to a substantial recognition of the ecclesial nature of their communities. Vatican II also rediscovered the rich eucharistic ecclesiology of the ancient

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 294-295. Emphasis original. Hotchkin cites from Jerome Hamer, “La terminologie ecclesiologique de Vatican II et les Ministeres Protestants,” *Documentation Catholique* (July 4, 1971): 625-8.

church that led it to teach that the fullness of ecclesial reality in a local church is intimately connected with the presence or absence of the genuine and total reality of the eucharistic mystery. What Vatican II never clearly addressed was whether Protestant and Anglican communities might deserve recognition as “churches” in the theological sense. This brief study of the Council has shown that this question was deliberately left open due to a difference of opinion among the conciliar fathers on this question. How these questions were addressed after the Council and where the Catholic Church stands today is the subject of Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO

CURRENT STATE OF THE QUESTION

## *1. Post-Conciliar Church Teaching on Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality*

In this section I shall examine the magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church since the Second Vatican Council as it pertains to the question of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. Because I intend to treat Pope Benedict XVI's writings in the following chapter on Joseph Ratzinger, his contributions to this question will not be discussed here. I include a range of official voices on this topic, such as the papal teachings of Paul VI and John Paul II as well as statements from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) and the Synod of Bishops.

### *1.1 Interpretation of "The Church of Christ Subsists in the Catholic Church"*

The debate on the interpretation of *Lumen Gentium* #8, which said that the church of Christ "subsists" in the Catholic Church, has produced a substantial body of literature from the CDF since the end of Vatican II. These developments are important for this study insofar as the interpretation of this relationship directly affects the question of the degree to which ecclesiality can be recognized in Christian communities outside the Catholic Church. A return to the pre-conciliar strict identification between the church of Christ and the Catholic Church, for example, would further complicate any official recognition of Protestant and Anglican communities as "churches" in the theological sense, irrespective of questions regarding Eucharist and ministry in these communities.

In fact, several statements of the CDF raise the question whether the Catholic Church is not indeed attempting to recover a more exclusive understanding of the relationship between the church of Christ and the Catholic Church. The first of these

statements came in response to Brazilian liberation theologian Leonardo Boff, who argued in his book *Church, Charism and Power* (1985) that *Lumen Gentium* #8 intended to say that the church of Christ subsists in non-Catholic Christian communities as well as in the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> In its notification to Leonardo Boff of the same year, the CDF rebutted Boff's interpretation of *Lumen Gentium* #8 and articulated its own: "The council, rather, had chosen the word *subsistit* precisely to make clear that there exists only one 'subsistence' of the true church, whereas outside its visible structure there exist only elements of church which, being elements of the church itself, tend and lead toward the Catholic Church (LG 8)."<sup>2</sup> The CDF, in stating that outside of the Catholic Church only "elements of church" exist, seemed to deny the reality of genuine non-Catholic churches. Jared Wicks notes that the CDF notification based this conclusion on a novel understanding of *subsistit* as "subsistence":

With the Boff notification, the CDF presented Vatican II's affirmation of the ongoing reality of the Church of Christ in the Catholic Church with an innovation, that is, by using the notion, 'subsistence,' which comes from a philosophical reflection on the continuity in being of a personal subject or agent.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "The Roman, Catholic, and apostolic Church is the Church of Christ on the one hand, and on the other, it is not. It is the Church of Christ inasmuch as through it the Church of Christ is present to the world. But at the same time it cannot claim an exclusive identity with the Church of Christ because the Church may also be present in other Christian churches. The Second Vatican Council, overcoming a theological ambiguity present in previous ecclesiologies that tended to identify the Roman Catholic Church with the Church of Christ in a simple and pure fashion, makes the following distinction: 'The Church [of Christ], constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church.'" See Leonardo Boff, *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, trans. John Dierksmeyer (New York: Crossroad, 1985): 75.

<sup>2</sup> The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), "Notification to Father Leonardo Boff," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 77 (1985): 758-59. Emphasis original. Translation is from Francis Sullivan, "*Quaestio Disputata*: Further Thoughts on *Subsistit In*," *Theological Studies* 71, no. 1 (March 2010): 138. Unless otherwise indicated, English translations of post-conciliar documents are from the Vatican website, <[http://www.vatican.va/phome\\_en.htm](http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm)>.

<sup>3</sup> Jared Wicks, "Questions and Answers on the New Responses of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith," *Ecumenical Trends* 36, no. 7 (July/August 2007): 3.

Francis Sullivan argues that the interpretation of *subsistit* as “subsistence” has its roots in Scholastic philosophy and is likely due to difficulties in translating the Council’s statement into German.<sup>4</sup> He also notes that the CDF in this notification adopted Fr. Sebastian Tromp’s interpretation of *subsistit in* which saw the church of Christ subsisting in the Catholic Church in an exclusive way, such that outside of it only “elements of church” exist.<sup>5</sup> Sullivan notes that the main difficulty with this interpretation is that Vatican II never stated that outside the Catholic Church *only* elements of church exist. *Lumen Gentium* #15, for instance, mentions that when non-Catholic Christians receive the sacraments, they do so “in their own churches or ecclesiastical communities.”<sup>6</sup>

The second statement of the CDF on the relationship of the church of Christ to the Catholic Church is found in *Dominus Iesus* (2000). The CDF issued *Dominus Iesus* in order to respond to what it perceived as a prevalent relativism that views other religions and Christian traditions as equally valuable and legitimate expressions of truth.<sup>7</sup> In the

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<sup>4</sup> Francis A. Sullivan writes: “However, those who translated the conciliar text into German translated *subsistit in* with such phrases as *ist verwirklicht in* (is realized in), or *hat ihre konkrete Existenzform in* (has its concrete form of existence in). These translations are based on the meaning that ‘subsistence’ came to have in Scholastic philosophy, rather than on the classical Latin meaning of *subsistere*. I believe it was the German translation that led some theologians to interpret ‘subsists’ in *Lumen gentium* no. 8 in the philosophical sense of ‘subsistence.’” See Francis A. Sullivan, “*Quaestio Disputata: The Meaning of Subsistit In* as Explained by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 117. See also Sullivan, “Further Thoughts on *Subsistit In*,” 139-40. Ratzinger, both as Prefect of the CDF and as a private theologian, has given this interpretation of *subsistit*, while Kasper has written that such an interpretation is not warranted. I present their respective interpretations in Chapters Three and Four.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Sullivan, “The One Church in Current Ecclesiology,” *Ecumenical Trends* 38, no. 1 (January 2009): 5. As stated in Chapter One, it was Tromp who first proposed the term “subsists in” for *Lumen Gentium* #8.

<sup>6</sup> Sullivan, “The Meaning of *Subsistit In*,” 118.

<sup>7</sup> That *Dominus Iesus* was a response to the CDF’s increasing concern over relativism is indicated by events such as the excommunication of the Sri Lankan priest-theologian Tissa Balasuriya and its investigation into the writings of Jaques Dupuis, S.J., the Belgian theologian who had recently authored the book, *Toward a Theology of Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997). See Stephen J. Pope and Charles Hefling, eds., *Sic and Non: Encountering Dominus Iesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002): ix.

fourth section of the document, “The Unicity and Unity of the Church,” the CDF seemed to quietly retract its earlier affirmation in the Boff notification from 1985 (even though it cites it in a footnote!) that outside the Catholic Church *only* elements of church exist:

With the expression *subsistit in*, the Second Vatican Council sought to harmonize two doctrinal statements: on the one hand, that the Church of Christ...continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church, and on the other hand, that ‘outside of her structure, many elements can be found of sanctification and truth’, that is, in those Churches and ecclesial communities which are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church.<sup>8</sup>

In *Dominus Iesus*, the CDF interpreted the expression *subsistit* to mean that the church of Christ exists *fully* only in the Catholic Church while recognizing also that there are authentic “churches” not in full communion with the Catholic Church.<sup>9</sup> Sullivan believes this interpretation is much more faithful to the conciliar texts of Vatican II than the CDF’s earlier interpretation in its notification to Boff.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, Richard Gaillardetz notes that the language of the *Dominus Iesus* whereby “the Church of Christ exists fully only in the Catholic Church” obscures a distinction the Council made between institutional integrity, which only the Catholic Church enjoys, and a more

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<sup>8</sup> CDF, *Dominus Iesus* (2000), #16.

<sup>9</sup> *Dominus Iesus* #17 goes on to say: “Therefore, there exists a single Church of Christ, which subsists in the Catholic Church, governed by the Successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him. The Churches which, while not existing in perfect communion with the Catholic Church, remain united to her by means of the closest bonds, that is, by apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, are true particular Churches.”

<sup>10</sup> See Sullivan, “The Meaning of *Subsistit In*,” 119: “To say that the church of Christ continues to exist fully only in the Catholic Church means that the Catholic Church alone has preserved everything that belongs to the church's integrity, such as the unity that is preserved through the communion of all its bishops with the pope, along with the fullness of the means of grace. This interpretation is confirmed by the Decree on Ecumenism, which says that the ‘unity of the one and only Church which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning...subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose, and we hope that it will continue to increase until the end of time’ (*Unitatis redintegratio* no. 4). On the other hand, the same decree says: ‘Our separated brethren, whether considered as individuals or as communities and churches, are not blessed with that unity which Jesus Christ wished to bestow on all those whom He has regenerated. For it is through Christ's Catholic Church, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained’ (ibid. no. 3).”



subjective or existential ecclesial vitality.<sup>11</sup> The impression one receives from *Dominus Iesus* is that such ecclesial vitality, rather than the institutional and sacramental means of salvation, also only fully exists in the Catholic Church.

The third statement of the CDF (whose prefect is now Cardinal William Levada) was released seven years after *Dominus Iesus* in the summer of 2007. “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church” (hereafter referred to as “Responses”) was issued in a question and answer format and consists of five questions with the CDF’s response to each question. It attempts to further clarify the meaning of the expression *subsistit* used in *Lumen Gentium* #8, and seeks to explain the proper use of the title “church” for non-Catholic Christian communities. The CDF also released an accompanying commentary with “Responses” that further elaborates on each response. According to Jared Wicks, the CDF chose to take up the interpretation of the expression *subsistit* again primarily because of ongoing theological debate over the meaning of this expression despite the attempted clarification in *Dominus Iesus*.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Richard Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making: Lumen Gentium, Christus Dominus, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* (New York/Malwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006): 117.

<sup>12</sup> Jared Wicks identifies two main events after *Dominus Iesus* that led the CDF to publish yet another document on the interpretation of *subsistit*. First, the Secretary of the CDF, Angelo Amato, published an article, “‘Dominus Iesus’: Recezione e problematiche. Una prima rassegna,” *Path* 1 (2001): 79-114, cataloguing many critical reactions by Catholic theologians to *Dominus Iesus*. Some of these criticisms contended that Vatican II was open to recognizing the church of Christ as concretely realized in the Christian communities of the Reformation. Other criticisms argued that holding such communities are not churches in the proper sense has no backing in the documents of Vatican II. The second event started with the 2002 dissertation by Alexandra von Teuffenback of Gregorian University, which made the discovery that Fr. Sebastian Tromp first proposed saying that the church of Christ “subsists in” the Catholic Church. Von Teuffenback argued that the final text thus must be interpreted to mean what it meant in Tromp’s thought and theology, namely a full and exclusive identity between the church of Christ and the Catholic Church. Her mentor, Karl Becker, a consultant for over twenty years at the CDF, later took up her position in the Vatican daily *Osservatore romano* [English translation in *Origins* 35 (January 19, 2006): 514-22]. Wicks suggests that given the criticisms of *Dominus Iesus*, Becker’s role in the CDF might have led some to mistake his argument as the official position of the CDF. See Wicks, “Questions and Answers,” 4-5.

In this document and accompanying commentary the CDF makes several strong statements that affirm the identity of the church of Christ with the Catholic Church. In the response to the third question, which asked, “Why was the expression ‘*subsists in*’ adopted instead of the simple word ‘*is*’ [in *Lumen Gentium* #8]?” the document states, “The use of this expression [“subsists in”], which indicates the full identity [*plenam identitatem*] of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church, does not change the doctrine on the Church.”<sup>13</sup> Some would see in this statement an affirmation of the doctrine of *Mystici Corporis*, which exclusively identified the church of Christ with the Catholic Church by stating that the church of Christ is (*est*) the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>14</sup> This impression is strengthened further in the CDF’s commentary on its own “Responses,” where it states “the change from *est* to *subsistit in* takes on no particular theological significance of discontinuity with previously held Catholic doctrine.”<sup>15</sup> The commentary goes on to say:

In reality, [all] the Council Fathers simply intended to do was to recognise the presence of ecclesial elements proper to the Church of Christ in the non-Catholic Christian communities. It does not follow that the identification of the Church of Christ with the Catholic Church no longer holds, nor that outside the Catholic Church there is a complete absence of ecclesial elements, a ‘*churchless void*.’<sup>16</sup>

Jarod Wicks explains the CDF’s use of the term “full identity” (*plenam identitatem*) in two ways. First, it means that all the essential endowments of the church of Christ, such

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<sup>13</sup> CDF, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church” (2007), Question #3. See also the CDF’s commentary on this document, which states: “In fact, precisely because the Church willed by Christ actually continues to exist (*subsistit in*) in the Catholic Church, this continuity of subsistence implies an essential identity between the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church.” In CDF, “Commentary on ‘Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church’” (2007), commentary on the third question.

<sup>14</sup> See my discussion in Chapter One, pp. 49-55.

<sup>15</sup> CDF, “Commentary on ‘Responses,’” commentary on the third question.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

as sacraments and ministries, are present in the Catholic Church. Second, it means that the church's inalienable marks of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity still mark out the Catholic Church. For Wicks, the "full identity" of the church of Christ with the Catholic Church cannot mean an exhaustive identity such that the Catholic Church absorbs all the endowments and salvific significance of the church of Christ.<sup>17</sup> Such an exhaustive identification would contradict those statements in *Lumen Gentium* and *Unitatis Redintegratio* that speak of non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities.<sup>18</sup> It would even contradict the CDF's own teaching in the "Responses," which mentions "churches and ecclesial Communities not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church."

In summary, the CDF's various statements on the meaning of the expression *subsistit* are rather difficult to interpret in a coherent way. Its notification to Boff in 1985 asserted that the expression *subsistit* implies that outside the Catholic Church only elements of church exist. *Dominus Iesus* (2000) interpreted *subsistit in* to mean that the church of Christ exists in a full way only in the Catholic Church, yet recognized the existence of authentic churches outside of it. The CDF's "Responses" (2007) and its accompanying commentary strongly emphasized the full identity of the church of Christ with the Catholic Church and its continuity with preconciliar Catholic teaching on this matter, seemingly agreeing with its earlier notification to Boff. Yet the "Responses" and commentary continue, as does *Dominus Iesus*, to recognize the existence of authentic

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<sup>17</sup> Wicks, "Questions and Answers," 6.

<sup>18</sup> See again *Lumen Gentium* #15 and the title of Chapter Three in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, "Churches and Ecclesial Communities Separated from the Roman Apostolic See," as well as the title of part two of the same chapter, "Separated Churches and Ecclesial Communities in the West," for a few examples wherein the conciliar texts refer to non-Catholic "churches and ecclesial communities."

non-Catholic churches outside of the Catholic Church, which seems to contradict its earlier notification to Boff that asserts outside the Catholic Church only “elements of church” exist.

### *1.2 The Ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican Communities*

It is clear that the Catholic Church has continued to acknowledge the separated Eastern churches as “churches” in the theological sense since Vatican II.<sup>19</sup> But how has the Catholic Church has understood the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities in its magisterial teaching since the end of Vatican II? Has the Catholic Church recognized any of these communities to be an authentic “church?” There is at least one concrete example to consider. Pope Paul VI, in his 1970 homily at the canonization of the forty martyrs of England and Wales, said:

There will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and the worthy patrimony of piety and usage proper to the Anglican Church, when the Roman Catholic Church—this ‘humble Servant of the servants of God’—is able to embrace her ever beloved Sister in the one authentic Communion of the family of Christ, a communion of origin and of faith, a communion of priesthood and of rule, a communion of the saints in the freedom of love of the Spirit of Jesus.<sup>20</sup>

Not only does Paul VI speak of the Anglican *Church* but he also speaks of the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church as sisters. It also is noteworthy that Paul VI recognized the Anglican Communion as a sister church despite the negative judgment of Pope Leo XIII in *Apostolicae Curae* regarding Anglican orders, which declared them null

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<sup>19</sup> See for example, CDF, *Communio notio* (1992), #17: “This communion exists especially with the Eastern Orthodox Churches, which, though separated from the See of Peter, remain united to the Catholic Church by means of very close bonds, such as the apostolic succession and a valid Eucharist, and therefore merit the title of particular Churches.”

<sup>20</sup> *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 62 (1970): 753. Cited in Francis A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press, 2001): 233-34.

and void. It appears that Paul VI did not in this homily believe that invalid orders necessarily implied that a Christian community was not properly speaking a “church.” Does this not suggest the possibility that Protestant and Anglican communities could be recognized as “churches” in the theological sense despite having invalid orders and Eucharist?

In addition to Paul VI, both John Paul II and the CDF have spoken more explicitly than the documents of Vatican II about the presence of the church of Christ in both non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities. John Paul II wrote, “To the extent that these elements [of sanctification and truth] are found in other Christian Communities, the one Church of Christ is effectively present in them.”<sup>21</sup> Likewise, the CDF in its “Responses” writes, “It is possible, according to Catholic doctrine, to affirm correctly that the Church of Christ is present and operative in the churches and ecclesial Communities not yet fully in communion with the Catholic Church, on account of the elements of sanctification and truth that are present in them.”<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, John Paul II, following the precedent set down in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, spoke several times in his encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) about the “Churches and ecclesial communities of the West.” He noted that common roots have

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<sup>21</sup> John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), #11. While the conciliar texts of Vatican II never made this statement, it was made in a *relatio* of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity to the fathers of the Council: “It must not be overlooked that the communities that have their origin in the separation that took place in the West are not merely a sum or collection of individual Christians, but they are constituted by social ecclesiastical elements which they have preserved from our common patrimony, and which confer on them a truly ecclesial character. In these communities the one sole Church of Christ is present, albeit imperfectly, in a way that is somewhat like its presence in particular churches, and by means of their ecclesiastical elements the Church of Christ is in some way operative in them.” See *Acta Synodalia* III/2, 335. Cited in Francis A. Sullivan, “A Response to Karl Becker, S.J. on the Meaning of *subsistit in*,” 406 and Francis Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In* (NY: Paulist Press, 1988): 32.

<sup>22</sup> CDF, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” response to the second question.

guided the development in the West of the “Churches and Communities which have their origins in the Reformation.”<sup>23</sup> He also credited the beginning of the ecumenical movement to the “Churches and Ecclesial Communities of the Reform.”<sup>24</sup> John Paul II also stated that the Council did not attempt to describe post-Reformation Christianity, since “in origin, teaching and spiritual practice, these Churches and Ecclesial Communities differ not only from us but also among themselves to a considerable degree.”<sup>25</sup> Thus while John Paul II did not name any specific Protestant community as a “church,” he repeatedly talked about the churches and ecclesial communities which trace their origin to the Reformation. These statements indicate that the Pope at this time did not uniformly withhold the appellation “church” from all Christian communities originating from the sixteenth century Reformation.<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, except for these words of Paul VI and John Paul II, official church documents have been completely uniform in following the precedent of *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 which describes those Christian communities with a *defectus sacramenti ordinis* as “ecclesial communities” rather than “churches.”<sup>27</sup> In addition, many post-conciliar documents interpret *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 as referring to the Christian communities of the Reformation, even though *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 itself did not name any particular group of ecclesial communities as lacking the sacrament of

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<sup>23</sup> John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* #65.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sin* #66.

<sup>26</sup> John Paul II does however believe that *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22, which speaks of those ecclesial communities lacking the sacrament of order, is referring to Post-Reformation Christian communities. See *Ut Unum Sint* #67 and John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), #30.

<sup>27</sup> See below (pages 134-36), for a fuller discussion of the meaning of this term. Because its translation is disputed, I have left the term in the Latin.

order. Thus post-conciliar church documents have consistently called Protestant and Anglican communities something others than “churches,” preferring instead to call them “ecclesial communities”<sup>28</sup> or simply “communities.”<sup>29</sup> In addition, there is no example of the Catholic Church recognizing the validity of any Protestant community’s Eucharist or ministry. Nor has the Catholic Church rescinded Leo XIII’s judgment in *Apostolicae Curae* that Anglican orders were absolutely null and utterly void.

It should be noted, however, that despite this nearly uniform terminological choice in describing Protestant and Anglican communities, it is only the CDF which has explicitly stated that Christian communities lacking valid Eucharist and ministry are *not* churches in the proper sense but *merely* “ecclesial communities”: “The ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery are not Churches in the proper sense....”<sup>30</sup> Recently, the CDF determined that all Christian communities originating from the Reformation lack the sacrament of order and hence do not merit the title of “church”:

According to Catholic doctrine, [Christian Communities born out of the Reformation of the sixteenth century] do not enjoy apostolic succession in the sacrament of Orders, and are, therefore, deprived of a constitutive element of the Church. These ecclesial Communities which, specifically because of the absence of the sacramental priesthood, have not preserved the genuine and integral

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<sup>28</sup> See Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), “Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism,” #18: “Later in the West more profound divisions caused other ecclesial Communities to come into being.”

<sup>29</sup> See Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, XI Ordinary General Assembly (2005), #86: “A favourable rapport has also developed between the Church and communities from the Reformation.”

<sup>30</sup> CDF, *Dominus Iesus* #17. See also the CDF “Note on the Expression ‘Sister Churches,’” (2000), #12: “Finally, it must also be borne in mind that the expression *sister Churches* in the proper sense, as attested by the common Tradition of East and West, may only be used for those ecclesial communities that have preserved a valid Episcopate and Eucharist.” John Paul II came close to saying the same when he wrote, “This succession [of uninterrupted valid episcopal ordinations] is essential for the Church to exist in a proper and full sense.” John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #28.

substance of the Eucharistic Mystery cannot, according to Catholic doctrine, be called ‘Churches’ in the proper sense.<sup>31</sup>

In its commentary on the above statement, the CDF further concluded that “it is nevertheless difficult to see how the title of ‘Church’ could possibly be attributed to them [the above Protestant and Anglican communities], given that they do not accept the theological notion of the Church in the Catholic sense and that they lack elements considered essential to the Catholic Church.”<sup>32</sup>

In this same 2007 commentary the CDF cited the text of *Unitatis Redintegratio* and John Paul II’s apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2001) to support its judgment on the ecclesiality of Protestant communities. The former reference probably refers to the text in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 that mentions those ecclesial communities, which because of a *defectus sacramenti ordinis*, have not retained the genuine and integral reality of the Eucharistic mystery.<sup>33</sup> As I noted in Chapter One, however, this text of Vatican II probably did not intend to designate “ecclesial communities” as a special category to be noted especially for not having retained the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery. Rather, it more likely intended to leave open the question of what is required in the theological sense for a community to be considered a “church” by using the twofold term “churches and ecclesial communities.” Furthermore, *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 never denied that these ecclesial communities are churches, nor did it

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<sup>31</sup> CDF, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” response to the fifth question.

<sup>32</sup> CDF, “Commentary on ‘Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church.’” See commentary on response to question five.

<sup>33</sup> While the commentary cites *Unitatis Redintegratio* #4, I can find nothing in that article relevant to this topic. *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 on the other hand is the only text that describes ecclesial communities as having *defectus sacramenti ordinis*.



explicitly connect the ecclesial communities described here with any Christian community originating in the Reformation.<sup>34</sup>

The other reference made by the CDF in the “Responses,” wherein it explicitly states that Christian communities born out of the Reformation are not “churches” in the proper sense, derives from the statement of John Paul II in which the pope merely describes the ecumenical commitment Catholics should have to foster dialogue with “our brothers and sisters belonging to the Anglican Communion and the Ecclesial Communities born of the Reformation.”<sup>35</sup> As before, although the term “church” is not explicitly applied to either Protestant or Anglican communities, this appellation is certainly not denied to them on the basis of any sacramental deficiency in Eucharist or ministry.

### *1.3 The Nature of the Eucharistic Mystery*

Given the CDF’s strong insistence that ecclesial communities are not “churches” in the theological sense because they have not retained the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery, it is imperative to explore the exact nature of this mystery and attempt to understand fully what it is that the Catholic Church claims these communities are lacking. The eucharistic mystery, as expounded in post-conciliar church documents, may be considered under a number of different aspects. The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland (CBCEWIS) in a 1998 statement declared that faith in the mystery of the Eucharist embraces, “the making present of

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of the terminological meaning of “ecclesial communities” in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22, see John Hotchkin, “Canon Law and Ecumenism: Giving Shape to the Future,” *Origins* 30, no. 19 (October 19, 2000): 289-98; Jerome Hamer, “La terminologie ecclésiologique de Vatican II et les ministères protestants,” *La Documentation Catholique* 68/13, no. 1589 (July 4, 1971): 625-28.

<sup>35</sup> John Paul II, *Novo Millenio Ineunte* (2001), #48.

Christ's saving death and resurrection, the real presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and the inseparable bond between the mystery of the Eucharist and the mystery of the Church.”<sup>36</sup> These three aspects of the eucharistic mystery provide a useful framework for considering the papal statements of Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II on the Eucharist as well as other official statements of lesser authority, such as those of the CDF, the PCPCU and the Sacred Congregation of Rites. Such a framework is my own attempt at discerning what the Catholic Church means by “the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery.”

### *1.3.1 The Eucharist as a Mystery of Sacrifice, Salvation and Communion*

What exactly does the Catholic Church mean when it describes the Eucharist as a “mystery?” Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), described the eucharistic mystery as follows: “When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, the memorial of her Lord's death and resurrection, this central event of salvation becomes really present and ‘the work of our redemption is carried out.’”<sup>37</sup> As a sign and sacrament, therefore, the Eucharist is a mystery of salvation. Yet, the Eucharist is also a mystery of communion: the celebration of the Eucharist in the church is the supreme sacramental manifestation of this communion of God with humankind.<sup>38</sup> Communion of

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<sup>36</sup> Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland (CBCEWIS), *One Bread One Body* (1998): 10.

<sup>37</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #11.

<sup>38</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #38.

the eucharistic Body of Christ signifies and produces the intimate communion of all the faithful in the Body of Christ which is the church.<sup>39</sup>

The Eucharist as a mystery of salvation and communion is intimately connected with the aspect of the Eucharist as a memorial of the paschal mystery. This aspect of the Eucharist was best summarized by Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* (1965): “It is a good idea to recall at the very outset what may be termed the heart and core of the doctrine, namely that, by means of the Mystery of the Eucharist, the Sacrifice of the Cross which was once carried out on Calvary is re-enacted in wonderful fashion and is constantly recalled.”<sup>40</sup> The memorial (*anamnesis*) of the sacrifice of the cross is no mere recollection of a past event in history. Rather, as Pope John Paul II wrote, “This sacrifice is made present ever anew, sacramentally perpetuated, in every community which offers it at the hands of the consecrated minister.”<sup>41</sup> He also noted that the celebration of the Eucharist makes present the sacrifice of the Cross; it does not add to that sacrifice nor does it multiply it. The sacrificial nature of the eucharistic mystery is not something separate or independent of the cross. Rather, the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice.<sup>42</sup>

The eucharistic mystery in its aspect as a memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ is the foundation of its dimension as a mystery of salvation and communion. As Paul VI wrote, “The Lord is immolated in an unbloody way in the Sacrifice of the Mass

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<sup>39</sup> The Synod of Bishops, Second Extraordinary General Assembly of (1985), *Final Report: Ecclesia sub Verbo Dei Mysteria Christi Celebrans pro Salute Mundi* (December 7, 1985): II-C, #1. Published in *Origins* 15, no. 27(December 19, 1985): 444-50. See page 448.

<sup>40</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei* (1965), #27.

<sup>41</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #12.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

and He re-presents the sacrifice of the Cross and applies its salvific power at the moment when he becomes sacramentally present....”<sup>43</sup> John Paul II connected the Sacrifice of the Eucharist and its saving efficacy with the communion of the faithful:

The saving efficacy of the sacrifice is fully realized when the Lord's body and blood are received in communion. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is intrinsically directed to the inward union of the faithful with Christ through communion; we receive the very One who offered himself for us, we receive his body which he gave up for us on the Cross and his blood which he ‘poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’ (Mt 26:28).<sup>44</sup>

He further noted that incorporation into Christ is renewed and consolidated by sharing in the eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, in the sacrifice of the Eucharist, there is also an ecclesial dimension in which Christ identifies himself with the church in his sacrifice and self-offering to the Father. Paul VI said: “The whole Church plays the role of priest and victim along with Christ, offering the Sacrifice of the Mass and itself completely offered in it.”<sup>46</sup> In giving his sacrifice to the church, Christ has also made his own the spiritual sacrifice of the church, which is called to offer herself in union with the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>47</sup> The eucharistic sacrifice is thus offered by the “whole Christ,” both head and members together as the one Body of Christ.

### *1.3.2 The Eucharist as a Mystery of Real Presence*

The above aspects of the Eucharist as a mystery of sacrifice, salvation and communion find their focus in the mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

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<sup>43</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei* #34.

<sup>44</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #16.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, #22.

<sup>46</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei* #31.

<sup>47</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #13.

John Paul II wrote, “It is precisely his presence which gives the other aspects of the Eucharist...a significance which goes far beyond mere symbolism. The Eucharist is a mystery of presence, the perfect fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to remain with us until the end of the world.”<sup>48</sup> Thus it is the aspect of the Eucharist as a mystery of real presence that imbues the other aspects of the eucharistic mystery, such as its various dimensions as a mystery of sacrifice, salvation and communion, with ultimate meaning and significance.

How then does the Catholic Church understand the mystery of the real presence? Paul VI, in his encyclical *Mysterium Fidei*, explained the Catholic Church’s understanding of how Christ becomes present in the eucharistic elements. Following the Council of Trent, he said, “The way in which Christ becomes present in this Sacrament is through the conversion of the whole substance of the bread into His body and of the whole substance of the wine into His blood, a unique and truly wonderful conversion that the Catholic Church fittingly and properly calls transubstantiation.”<sup>49</sup> It should be noted, however, that mystery of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is not meant to deny that Christ is really present in his church in other ways. As Paul VI noted, “This presence is called ‘real’ not to exclude the idea that [other forms of Christ’s presence] are ‘real’ too, but rather to indicate presence par excellence, because it is substantial and through it Christ becomes present whole and entire, God and man.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (2004), #16.

<sup>49</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei* #46.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., #39. Vatican II, in its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), described the various ways Christ is present in his church: “Christ is always present to his church, especially during the liturgy, so that this great task can be fully accomplished. He is present through the sacrifice which is the mass, at once in the person of the minister—‘the same one who then offered himself on a cross is now making his offering through the agency of priests’—and also, most fully, under the eucharistic elements. He is present through his power in the sacraments; thus, when anyone baptizes, Christ himself is baptizing.

### 1.3.3 *The Eucharistic Mystery as Constitutive of the Church*

Following the eucharistic ecclesiology recovered at the Council, the Catholic Church in its official statements has continued to emphasize the importance of the eucharistic mystery in constituting the church. John Paul II, in his apostolic letter *Dominicae Cenae* (1980), made use of the aphorism of Henri de Lubac: “Just as the Church ‘makes the Eucharist’ so ‘the Eucharist builds up’ the Church; and this truth is closely bound up with the mystery of Holy Thursday.”<sup>51</sup> He also argued that it is not enough for a local Christian community merely to assemble regularly in order to be the church:

The Church is not brought into being only through the union of people, through the experience of brotherhood to which the Eucharistic Banquet gives rise. The Church is brought into being when, in that fraternal union and communion, we celebrate the sacrifice of the cross of Christ, when we proclaim ‘the Lord's death until he comes,’ and later, when, being deeply compenetrated with the mystery of our salvation, we approach as a community the table of the Lord, in order to be nourished there, in a sacramental manner, by the fruits of the holy Sacrifice of propitiation.<sup>52</sup>

Thus, the church is not brought into being through the mere assembly of Christians but rather is truly made real in the sacramental renewal of this mystery in the celebration of the Eucharist. In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003) John Paul II said, “The Church was born of the paschal mystery. For this very reason the Eucharist, which is in an

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He is present through his word, in that he himself is speaking when scripture is read in church. Finally, he is present when the church is praying or singing hymns, he himself who promised, ‘where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them’ (Mt 18,20).” Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2 (London: Sheed and Ward/Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990): 822.

<sup>51</sup> John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae* (1980), #4.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

outstanding way the sacrament of the paschal mystery, stands at the centre of the Church's life.”<sup>53</sup>

#### *1.4 The Fruits of the Eucharistic Mystery*

It is significant that John Paul II above described the eucharistic mystery as constituting the assembly as “church” partly through “the fruits of the holy Sacrifice of propitiation” which the faithful receive at the table of the Lord. In terms of the aim of this dissertation, to assess whether “ecclesial fruitfulness” might serve as a standard for “church,” and given the fact that the Catholic Church places decisive importance on the presence of the eucharistic mystery for constituting a community as a church, it is crucial also to examine what the Catholic Church has taught since Vatican II about the *fruitfulness* of the eucharistic mystery.

Catholic teaching emphasizes that the Eucharist produces (or is intended to produce) “fruit” that effects visible change in the faithful. In fact, a visible change in the People of God is arguably the ultimate goal of the presence of the eucharistic mystery in the church. John Paul II described the Eucharist as a “fruitful” sacrament: “Each member of the faithful can thus take part in [the Eucharist] and inexhaustibly gain its fruits.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, the primary spiritual fruit of the Eucharist is that it strengthens and deepens one’s union with Christ and the unity of the church. This deepening of each celebrant’s union with Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist is most visible in the strengthening of

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<sup>53</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #3. See also the CDF’s document, *Communio in notio* (1992): “The Eucharist, in which the Lord gives us his Body and transforms us into one Body, is where the Church expresses herself permanently in [its] most essential form,” #5.

<sup>54</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #11. See also Canon 899 §3 of the Code of Canon Law : “The eucharistic celebration is to be organized in such a way that all those participating receive from it the many fruits *for which* Christ the Lord instituted the eucharistic sacrifice.” Emphasis mine.

communion with one another. John Paul II wrote that the Eucharist is fruitful in creating and fostering the communion and unity of the church.<sup>55</sup>

Another visible fruit of the Eucharist is that it engenders in the recipient a deep and active love for God and one's neighbor. Paul VI noted that the eucharistic mystery is the center of the liturgy *because* of the love it produces in the faithful: "The Eucharistic Mystery stands at the heart and center of the liturgy, since it is the font of life that cleanses us and strengthens us to live not for ourselves but for God and to be united to each other by the closest ties of love."<sup>56</sup> John Paul II described the love the Eucharist effects in the faithful as spontaneously springing up from within the faithful:

Every time that we consciously share in [the Eucharist], there opens in our souls a real dimension of that unfathomable love that includes everything that God has done and continues to do for us human beings.... There also springs up within us a lively response of love. We not only know love; we ourselves begin to love. We enter, so to speak, upon the path of love and along this path make progress. Thanks to the Eucharist, the love that springs up within us from the Eucharist develops in us, becomes deeper and grows stronger.<sup>57</sup>

A third visible fruit of the eucharistic mystery is that it produces a great impulse for mission and evangelization in the faithful. This effect is a result of the communion with Christ the faithful experience in the eucharistic celebration.<sup>58</sup> John Paul II spoke

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<sup>55</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #40-1. In addition, the Sacred Congregation of Rites says, "It is clear that the frequent or daily reception of the Blessed Eucharist increases union with Christ, nourishes the spiritual life more abundantly, strengthens the soul in virtue, and gives the communicant a stronger pledge of eternal happiness." Sacred Congregation of Rites, *Instruction on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery (Eucharisticum*

*Mysterium*), #37, in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, new revised edition, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei* #2.

<sup>57</sup> John Paul II, *Dominicae Cena* #5.

<sup>58</sup> John Paul II wrote: "Once we have truly met the Risen One by partaking of his body and blood, we cannot keep to ourselves the joy we have experienced. The encounter with Christ, constantly intensified and deepened in the Eucharist, issues in the Church and in every Christian an urgent summons to testimony and evangelization." See *Mane Nobiscum Domine* #24.



about the spiritual power for evangelization and mission that issues forth from the

Eucharist:

From the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the Cross and her communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, the Church draws the spiritual power needed to carry out her mission. The Eucharist thus appears as both the source and the summit of all evangelization, since its goal is the communion of mankind with Christ and in him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to a strong desire for mission and evangelization, the Eucharist also produces in the faithful a strong desire to work for social justice and peace in the world, instilling in the community a practical commitment for building a more just and fraternal society.<sup>60</sup>

In summary, the Catholic Church describes many fruits of the eucharistic mystery that effect (or should effect) a *visible* change in the faithful. Such fruits include: deeper communion among Christians, greater love for God and neighbor, and a strong desire for mission and social justice.

### *1.5 The Preconditions of the Eucharistic Mystery*

Having summarized the nature and content of the eucharistic mystery without which, the CDF teaches, a Christian community is not properly a “church” in the theological sense and having explored what kinds of effects or “fruits” such a mystery is expected to produce in a community which possesses its reality, I turn now to consider the issue of the validity of sacramental orders in Protestant and Anglican communities. Recall that the CDF’s 2007 document, “Responses,” emphasized that it is “specifically because of the absence of the sacramental priesthood” that Protestant communities “have

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<sup>59</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #22.

<sup>60</sup> See John Paul II, *Mane Nobiscum Domine* #28. “In the celebration of the Eucharist the Church constantly renews her awareness of being a ‘sign and instrument’ not only of intimate union with God but also of the unity of the whole human race.... The Christian who takes part in the Eucharist learns to become a promoter of communion, peace and solidarity in every situation,” Ibid., #27.

not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic Mystery.”<sup>61</sup> Such a judgment naturally raises further questions: First, why is it necessary for a Christian community to possess a valid sacramental priesthood in order to bring about the eucharistic mystery? Second, how is the sacramental priesthood preserved and passed on in the church? Finally, and particularly important for this dissertation, does the Catholic Church claim to be *certain* that Protestant and Anglican ministry is not a sacramental ministry capable of bringing about something of the reality of the eucharistic mystery? Or, does it claim something less, namely that it is simply *not sure of* the sacramental nature of Protestant and Anglican ministry insofar as their orders have not been preserved in the historic apostolic succession of bishops?<sup>62</sup>

#### *1.5.1 The Significance of the Sacrament of Order for the Eucharistic Mystery*

John Paul II maintained that the ordained ministry exists principally for the Eucharist and came into being together with its institution.<sup>63</sup> Its purpose in regard to the Eucharist is to offer the eucharistic sacrifice *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ). This term, with roots at least as far back as St. Thomas Aquinas, means that the ordained

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<sup>61</sup> CDF, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” response to question five.

<sup>62</sup> In discussing the judgment of the Catholic Church on the orders of Protestant and Anglican communities, it is important to remember that Leo XIII, in his papal bull *Apostolicae curae* (1896), declared Anglican orders “absolutely null and utterly void” (#36). No explicit judgment has been made at the highest magisterial levels of Catholic teaching regarding the orders of any specific Protestant community.

<sup>63</sup> “The Eucharist is the principal and central *raison d’être* of the sacrament of the priesthood, which effectively came into being at the moment of the institution of the Eucharist, and together with it.” John Paul II, *Dominicae Cena* #2. See also John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #31. Susan Wood argued that *Lumen Gentium* presented a much broader theology of priestly identity when it identifies priests and bishops as priests, prophets and shepherds within the threefold office of sanctifying, teaching and governing. See Susan K. Wood, “*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: A Roman Catholic Response” *Pro Ecclesia* 12 (2003): 398.

person is *vicarius Christi*, a vicar of Christ, who acts in the place and person of Christ.<sup>64</sup>

Yet, John Paul II taught that *in persona Christi* means more than offering the Eucharist “in place of” or “in the name of Christ.” Rather, to offer the Eucharist *in persona Christi* means that the eucharistic sacrifice is offered “in specific sacramental identification with ‘the eternal High Priest’ who is the author and principal subject of this sacrifice of His....”<sup>65</sup> The CDF, in its 1983 document *Sacerdotium Ministeriale*, likewise wrote:

[Christ] so configures them [bishops and priests] to himself that, when they pronounce the words of consecration, they do not act on a mandate from the community but ‘*in persona Christi*’, which means more than just ‘in the name of Christ’ or ‘in the place of Christ’ since the celebrant...identifies himself with the Eternal High Priest, who is both author and principal agent of his own sacrifice in which truly no one can take his place.<sup>66</sup>

This special configuration or sacramental character is often described in terms of the reception of a “sacred power” which enables the ordained minister to bring into being the eucharistic sacrifice. For instance, John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992), said, “By sacramental consecration the priest is configured to Jesus Christ as head and shepherd of the Church, and he is endowed with a ‘spiritual power’ that is a share in the authority with which Jesus Christ guides the Church through his Spirit.”<sup>67</sup> As with the term *in persona Christi*, the notion that the sacrament of order

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<sup>64</sup> See Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000): 65. For a history of the term *in persona Christi*, see Bernard Dominique Marliangéas, *Clés pour une théologie du ministère: In persona Christi, in persona Ecclesiae* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1978). The meaning of the term *in persona Christi* in St. Thomas Aquinas has been the subject of debate in the context of the issue of women’s ordination. See Dennis M. Ferrara, “Representation or Self-Effacement? The Axiom *In Persona Christi* in St. Thomas and the Magisterium,” *Theological Studies* 55 (1994): 195-224 and Sara Butler, “Quaestio Disputata ‘In Persona Christi’: A Response to Dennis M. Ferrara,” *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 61-80.

<sup>65</sup> John Paul II, *Dominicae Cenae* #6.

<sup>66</sup> CDF, *Sacerdotium Ministeriale* #II-4, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 75 (1983): 1001-1009.

<sup>67</sup> John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (1992), #21.

conveys a “sacramental character” and invests the ordinand with “sacred power” has its origin in scholastic theology.<sup>68</sup>

In summary, the Catholic Church teaches that the sacrament of order marks the ordained with a special character or configuration that sacramentally identifies him with Christ the High Priest in the celebration of the Eucharist. The sacrament of order configures the ordained to Christ by endowing him with a spiritual and sacred power. This power is commonly described as *something* the ordained possesses and which enables or authorizes him to bring into being the eucharistic mystery.

#### *1.5.2 The Sacrament of Order and Apostolic Succession in the Episcopate*

How is this sacred power known to be preserved and communicated to the ordained ministry of the church? The Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU) stated in 1970, “The Catholic Church attaches a decisive importance to the traditional teaching about the necessity of the ministerial priesthood connected with the apostolic succession.”<sup>69</sup> The sacramental priesthood was given to the apostles by Christ and henceforth was preserved in the church by their successors. This priesthood is viewed as consisting of the possession of sacred powers which must be exercised and handed on so that Christ will remain present in the church. Thus, John Paul II wrote, “Jesus...conferred on Peter and the Twelve entirely special powers with regard to the future community and the evangelization of all peoples....”<sup>70</sup> In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Pastores*

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<sup>68</sup> See Kenan Osborne, *Priesthood: A History of the Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988): 204-6.

<sup>69</sup> Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), “Declaration on the Position of the Catholic Church on the Celebration of the Eucharist in Common by Christians of Different Confessions” (January 1970): #4, in Flannery, *The Conciliar and Postconciliar Documents*, 504.

<sup>70</sup> John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* #14.

*Gregis* (2003), John Paul II explained how this sacred power of the apostles was handed on in the church:

The special outpouring of the Holy Spirit with which the Risen Lord filled the Apostles (cf. Acts 1:5; 8; 2:4; Jn 20:22-23) was shared by them through the gesture of laying hands upon their co-workers (cf. 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6-7). These in turn transmitted it by the same gesture to others, and these to others still. In this way, the spiritual gift given in the beginning has come down to our own day through the imposition of hands, in other words, by episcopal consecration, which confers the fullness of the sacrament of Orders, the high priesthood and the totality of the sacred ministry. Thus, through the Bishops and the priests, their co-workers, the Lord Jesus Christ, seated at the right hand of God the Father, remains present in the midst of believers.<sup>71</sup>

In other words, the sacramental priesthood that is required to offer the Eucharist *in persona Christi* was given by Christ to the apostles, who in turn passed it on to the bishops, their successors, through the imposition of hands in successive episcopal consecrations.

Thus it belongs to the bishops who have been ordained in the recognized line of apostolic succession to confer the sacrament of order on those to be ordained and thus to initiate them into the sacramental priesthood. The CDF stated, “When [the Catholic Church] imposes hands on those to be ordained and invokes upon them the Holy Spirit, she is conscious of handing on the power of the Lord who makes the Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, partakers in a special way of his threefold priestly, prophetic and royal mission.”<sup>72</sup> Here again episcopal consecration is seen as the handing on of a

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<sup>71</sup> John Paul II, *Pastores Gregis* (2003), #6. See also CDF, *Mysterium Ecclesiae* #6: “Moreover, Christ, the Head of the Church, which is His Mystical Body, appointed as ministers of His priesthood His Apostles and through them their successors the bishops, that they might act in His person within the Church, and also in turn legitimately hand over to priests in a subordinate degree the sacred ministry which they had received. Thus there arose in the Church the apostolic succession of the ministerial priesthood for the glory of God and for the service of His people and of the entire human family, which must be converted to God.”

<sup>72</sup> CDF, *Sacerdotium Ministeriale* #III-3.

sacred power that configures the ordained to be partakers in Christ's priestly ministry. Because this sacred power is only received from those bishops who already possess such power themselves, the Catholic Church has taught that apostolic succession is only preserved through the *uninterrupted* sequence of episcopal ordinations over time. Thus John Paul II wrote, "Succession to the Apostles in the pastoral mission necessarily entails the sacrament of Holy Orders, that is, the uninterrupted sequence, from the very beginning, of valid episcopal ordinations."<sup>73</sup> This idea is also affirmed in the Vatican's response to the Final Report of ARCIC I: "The Catholic Church recognizes in the apostolic succession both an unbroken line of episcopal ordination from Christ through the apostles down through the centuries to the bishops of today...."<sup>74</sup>

### *1.5.3 The Sacramentality of Protestant and Anglican Ministry*

This summary of how an ordained minister comes to be sacramentally identified with Christ such that he may offer the Eucharist *in persona Christi* brings me to my last question about the present state of Catholic teaching on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. This question may be stated as follows: "Does the Catholic Church's teaching on the sacrament of order and its normative connection to the original apostolic ministry via a series of uninterrupted episcopal ordinations absolutely preclude the possibility that Protestant and Anglican communities may have a genuinely sacramental ministry despite any deficiencies which may exist in their orders? Or does the Catholic Church merely claim that it is not *certain* whether Protestant and Anglican

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<sup>73</sup> John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #28.

<sup>74</sup> PCPCU and CDF, "Catholic Response to the Final Report of ARCIC I," *Origins* 21, no. 28 (December 19, 1991): 446. There have been recent theological developments concerning the understanding of apostolic succession that I shall address later in this chapter.

communities have a sacramental ministry capable of preserving *something* of the reality of the eucharistic mystery?”

What is absolutely certain is that the Catholic Church since Vatican II has repeatedly affirmed that the sacrament of order and the presence of an ordained priest are absolutely required to bring about the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery. In *Sacerdotium Ministeriale* (1983), the CDF taught, “It is only the ministerial priest who, in virtue of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, can confect the Eucharistic sacrifice in the person of Christ and offer it in the name of all Christian people.”<sup>75</sup>

Further on, in this same document the CDF says:

Since it is of the very nature of the Church that the power to consecrate the Eucharist is imparted only to the Bishops and Priests who are constituted its ministers by the reception of Holy Orders, the Church holds that the Eucharistic mystery cannot be celebrated in any community except by an ordained Priest, as expressly taught by the Fourth Lateran Council.<sup>76</sup>

It is clear therefore, that the Catholic Church has repeatedly taught that a Christian community requires its ministers, through the reception of the sacrament of order, to be sacramentally identified with Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist in order for them to bring about the eucharistic mystery.

What is less clear is whether the Catholic Church teaches *definitively* that the sacrament of order is *not* validly conferred by ordained ministers who stand outside the

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<sup>75</sup> CDF, *Sacerdotium Ministeriale* #I-1.

<sup>76</sup> CDF, *Sacerdotium Ministeriale* #II-4. The Fourth Lateran Council declared in Canon One: “There is indeed one universal church of the faithful, outside of which nobody at all is saved, in which Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God’s power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us. Nobody can effect this sacrament except a priest who has been properly ordained according to the church’s keys, which Jesus Christ himself gave to the apostles and their successors.” See Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1 (London: Sheed and Ward/Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990): 230.

recognized apostolic succession of bishops. On the one hand, there are many statements in official documents of the Catholic Church stating that the ordained ministry must be connected with the apostolic succession in the episcopate. On the other hand, the context of many of the strongest statements on this issue is set within the Catholic Church's reaffirmation that the ministerial priesthood differs essentially from the common priesthood of the baptized and not merely in degree. For example, the CDF, responding to theologians such as Edward Schillebeeckx and Hans Küng, who argued that in emergency situations the laity could preside at the Eucharist, declared, "In teaching that the priestly or hierarchical ministry differs essentially and not only in degree from the common priesthood of the faithful, the Second Vatican Council expressed the certainty of faith that only Bishops and Priests can confect the Eucharistic mystery...."<sup>77</sup> The CDF here is condemning the proposition "that the power to confect the sacrament of the Eucharist is not necessarily connected with sacramental ordination."<sup>78</sup> Such an idea is "absolutely incompatible with the faith as it has been handed down, since not only does it deny the power conferred on priests but it undermines the entire apostolic structure of the Church and distorts the sacramental economy of salvation itself."<sup>79</sup> Thus the CDF seems to be teaching that only bishops and priests connected with the apostolic structure of the church through an uninterrupted series of episcopal ordinations possess the power of confecting the eucharistic mystery. This was explicitly stated when the CDF wrote:

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<sup>77</sup> CDF, *Sacerdotium Ministeriale* #I-1. See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry, Leadership in the Community of Jesus Christ*, trans. John Bowden (New York: Crossroads, 1981) and Hans Küng, *Why Priests? A Proposal for a New Church Ministry*, trans. Robert C. Collins (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972).

<sup>78</sup> CDF, *Sacerdotium Ministeriale* #II-1.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*



Included among these powers which Christ entrusted exclusively to the Apostles and their successors is the power of confecting the Eucharist. To the Bishops alone, and to the Priests they have made sharers in their ministry which they themselves have received, is reserved the power of renewing in the mystery of the Eucharist what Christ did at the Last Supper.<sup>80</sup>

While these statements are very strong in emphasizing the necessity of apostolic succession for conferring the sacrament of order, it should be recalled that the CDF here is arguing against theologians, such as Schillebeeckx and Hans Küng, who ask whether sacramental ordination is ever not necessary for celebrating the Eucharist, and not against those who suggest that the ministry of Protestant and Anglican communities may be, in some imperfect yet real way, a genuinely sacramental ministry.

John Paul II likewise emphasized the necessary connection of the Eucharist with apostolic succession in an almost identical context. In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003), he argued that those who reduce the sacramental nature of the Eucharist to merely an effective form of proclamation are obscuring the importance and necessity of the ministerial priesthood grounded in the apostolic succession.<sup>81</sup> Elsewhere he argued that the priestly ministry is a gift that transcends the power of the assembly and is necessary for the eucharistic mystery:

The ministry of priests who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders, in the economy of salvation chosen by Christ, makes clear that the Eucharist which they celebrate is a gift which radically transcends the power of the assembly and is in any event essential for validly linking the Eucharistic consecration to the sacrifice of the Cross and to the Last Supper. The assembly gathered together for the celebration of the Eucharist, if it is to be a truly Eucharistic assembly, absolutely requires the presence of an ordained priest as its president.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., #II-4.

<sup>81</sup> See John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #10.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., #29.

It is clear that he is speaking against the suggestion that any Christian, on account of their baptismal priesthood, may preside at the Eucharist.<sup>83</sup> Rather, an ordained priest is essential in order to truly bring about the eucharistic mystery. John Paul II then argued for the necessity of episcopal succession for conferring the sacrament of order on the following grounds:

On the other hand, the community is by itself incapable of providing an ordained minister. This minister is a gift which the assembly receives through episcopal succession going back to the Apostles. It is the Bishop who, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, makes a new presbyter by conferring upon him the power to consecrate the Eucharist.<sup>84</sup>

Because it is only through episcopal succession that the minister may receive the power for consecrating the Eucharist, John Paul II stated elsewhere in this encyclical that this succession is essential for the church to exist in a proper and full sense.<sup>85</sup> Again, while these statements on the necessity of apostolic succession for conferring the sacrament of order are very strong, it should be remembered that they are given to reaffirm the idea that the priestly ministry differs essentially from the common priesthood of the baptized.

How these statements may be tempered or qualified by an authority (though a lesser authority) of the Catholic Church when spoken in a context directly bearing on our question may be seen in the document of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland (CBCEWIS), *One Bread One Body* (1998). In a

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<sup>83</sup> See also John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #30, where it is again clear that he is arguing against those who suggest that all Christians may preside at the Eucharist: "The fact that the power of consecrating the Eucharist has been entrusted only to Bishops and priests does not represent any kind of belittlement of the rest of the People of God, for in the communion of the one body of Christ which is the Church this gift redounds to the benefit of all."

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., #29.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., #28.

defense of why sacramental sharing is not permissible with “Christian communities rooted in the Reformation,” the bishops state:

It is Catholic teaching that ‘only a validly ordained priest can be the minister who, in the person of Christ, brings into being the sacrament of the Eucharist.’ It is therefore essential that the one who presides at the Eucharist be known to be established in a sure sacramental relationship with Christ, the High Priest, through the sacrament of Holy Orders conferred by a bishop in the recognised apostolic succession.<sup>86</sup>

In affirming Catholic teaching that an ordained priest is required to confect the eucharistic mystery, the CBCEWIS states that ordination in the recognized apostolic succession of bishops is crucial, not because it is the *only* way to place the ordained minister into a sacramental relationship with Christ, but because it is the only *certain* way to do so. Furthermore, sacramental sharing with “Christian communities of the Reformation” is forbidden because the “Catholic Church is unable to affirm this [that a sure sacramental relationship with Christ exists in the ordained ministry] of those Christian communities rooted in the Reformation. Nor can we affirm that they have retained ‘the authentic and full reality of the Eucharistic mystery.’”<sup>87</sup> Does the CBCEWIS here appear to leave open the possibility that in fact the ordained ministers of these communities may have such a sacramental relationship with Christ and consequently have something of the reality of the eucharistic mystery? Do they merely state that sacramental sharing is not possible because they cannot affirm this sacramental relationship with certitude on account of the fact that these communities do not have

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<sup>86</sup> CBCEWIS, *One Bread One Body*, 28.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

ministerial orders in the recognized apostolic succession of bishops? Perhaps, however, there are other ways of establishing with certitude this sacramental relationship?

How the Catholic Church understands the ordained ministry of Protestant and Anglican communities and its sacramental relationship with Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist was clearly expressed by the CDF in its 2007 document, “Responses”:

These ecclesial Communities [Christian communities born out of the Reformation of the sixteenth century] which, specifically because of the absence of the sacramental priesthood, have not preserved the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic Mystery cannot, according to Catholic doctrine, be called ‘Churches’ in the proper sense.<sup>88</sup>

Despite the denial here that Protestant and Anglican communities have preserved the sacramental priesthood, there are at least two other official Catholic statements that leave room for a different evaluation of the ordained ministry in Protestant and Anglican communities. *One Bread One Body* appears to suggest that the Catholic Church cannot affirm with certainty that Protestant and Anglican orders are genuinely sacramental.

Another interpretation is found in the official response of the Catholic Church, jointly prepared by the SPCU and the CDF, to the 1982 ecumenical document *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM).<sup>89</sup> In the section dealing with what BEM proposed for the “mutual recognition of ordained ministries,” the response stated:

It must be clear that the recognition of ordained ministry cannot be isolated from its ecclesiological context. The recognition of the ordained ministry and of the ecclesial character of a Christian community are indissolubly and mutually related. To the extent that it can be recognized that a communion now exists between churches and ecclesial communities, however imperfect that communion may be, there is implied some recognition of the ecclesial reality of the other.

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<sup>88</sup> CDF, “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” response to the fifth question.

<sup>89</sup> The World Council of Churches (WCC), *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1982): 466-503.

The question that follows is what does this communion imply for the way in which we perceive the ministry of the other?<sup>90</sup>

As Francis Sullivan noted, this document of the CDF and the SPCU suggests that ministry may be judged from the previously established ecclesiality of a Christian community.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, the above statement of the CDF and the SPCU certainly appears to leave room for the possibility that there may be other ways of evaluating whether the ordained ministry in Protestant and Anglican communities has the proper sacramental relationship with Christ necessary for bringing into being something of the reality of the eucharistic mystery. I wish to suggest in this dissertation that “ecclesial fruitfulness” could be one of those ways.

In summary, the Catholic Church’s teaching since Vatican II on the ecclesial reality of Protestant and Anglican communities shows that the judgment of the CDF that they are not “churches” in the theological sense clearly depends upon a particular methodology for identifying “church.” This approach may be summarized as follows: “Churches” in the theological sense are only those Christian communities possessing the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery. But the retention of the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery in a Christian community requires a presiding minister who has received valid sacramental orders. And the validity of a community’s sacramental orders entirely depends upon the minister of the Christian community remaining within the uninterrupted apostolic succession of bishops. The

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<sup>90</sup> CDF and PCPCU, “Official Response of the Roman Catholic Church to *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*,” *Origins* 17 /23 (November 9, 1987): 410-16. Cited in Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 235. In 1989 the SPCU was reorganized as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU).

<sup>91</sup> See Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 235.

CDF's method of evaluating whether a Christian community is a "church," therefore, is reduced fundamentally to a consideration of the validity of its ministry.

## *2. Post-Conciliar Developments on Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality*

In this section I shall describe how theologians since Vatican II have criticized this methodology of the Catholic Church in a number of ways. Some, such as Luis Bermejo, Francis Sullivan and Susan Wood, have questioned the adequacy of proceeding primarily from an evaluation of the validity of a community's ministry to an evaluation of its ecclesiality. Other theologians, such as Gregory Baum and Richard Gaillardetz, argue that a proper standard for evaluating ecclesiality should take into account an evaluation of the faith, sacramental life and ecclesial vitality of a community as much as, if not more than, the institutional validity of its ministerial orders. Still other theologians, such as Harry McSorely, Kenan Osborne and John Burkhard, have tried to demonstrate that the Catholic Church uses theologically (and sometimes historically) problematic understandings of apostolic succession, the sacrament of order, and sacramental validity when evaluating the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. I shall describe these criticisms and developments while consigning the important contributions of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper to later chapters.

### *2.1 Searching for an Adequate Criterion of Ecclesiality*

Luis Bermejo and John Burkhard are two theologians today who are convinced that questions of methodology remain crucial for properly evaluating ecclesiality and "church." Bermejo, commenting on the Catholic Church's reluctance to recognize Protestant communities as authentic churches, has recognized the issue as primarily a

methodological one. He said, “The heart of the problem seems to be to determine which is the supreme model according to which the other Christian communities are to be judged and their various degrees of ‘ecclesiality’ to be measured.”<sup>92</sup> Others, such as John Burkhard, believe that fully developed theological criteria for judging the ecclesiality of a Christian community remain elusive even today. Burkhard admires Cardinal Willebrands’ notion of an ecclesial “type” (see below) as a criterion of ecclesiality. He observes, “It is evident that much more needs to be said about defining ecclesiality and recognizing it.”<sup>93</sup> In addition, there have been numerous criticisms, both Catholic and non-Catholic, of the CDF’s recent statements that Protestant and Anglican communities are “not churches in the proper sense of the word.” Significant arguments by theologians such as Sullivan and Bermejo also have been made for developing the Catholic Church’s criteria for judging the ecclesiality of these Christian communities. I describe some of these criticisms and arguments below.

### *2.1.1 Criticism of the Catholic Church’s Criterion for Identifying “Church”*

The CDF has received much criticism in its recent declarations<sup>94</sup> for the way it has evaluated the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. These criticisms maintain that the CDF has not considered or been significantly impacted by the decades of ecumenical dialogue that has taken place with these communities. Thomas Rausch,

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<sup>92</sup> Luis Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion—Vatican I: Obstacles and Opportunities* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987): 307.

<sup>93</sup> John Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now: An Ecumenical Church in a Postmodern World* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004): 245.

<sup>94</sup> See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Declaration on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church – *Dominus Iesus*,” *Origins* 30, no. 14 (September 14, 2000): 209-19; “Note on the Expression ‘Sister Churches,’” *Origins* 30, no. 14 (September 14, 2000): 223-24; and “Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine on the Church,” *Origins* 37, no. 9 (July 19, 2007): 134-36.

for example, described the reactions of non-Catholic dialogue partners to the teaching of *Dominus Iesus* regarding ecclesial communities:

Nevertheless, the document was overall a public relations disaster for the Church. Many of the Church's dialogue partners...found it offensive. George L. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury, said that 'the idea that Anglican and other churches are not "proper churches" seems to question the considerable ecumenical gains we have made.' The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), based in Geneva, considered canceling a dialogue session.<sup>95</sup>

Francis Sullivan also felt *Dominus Iesus* failed to properly take into account the ecumenical advances of recent decades: "One would think that the progress made in more than 30 years of dialogue with those communities would have suggested a more positive recognition of their ecclesial reality."<sup>96</sup>

Sullivan and Bermejo consistently have criticized the one-dimensional methodology of the CDF which argues only from the validity of ministry to the ecclesiality of the community. They emphasize that it is possible and even preferable to start with the ecclesiality of the community and then form judgments about the validity of a community's ministry.<sup>97</sup> As already noted, this approach seems to have been implied by the official response of the Catholic Church to BEM. In criticizing the recent statements of the CDF on ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities, Sullivan wrote, "We need not limit ourselves to arguing, as the CDF has done, from a negative

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<sup>95</sup> Thomas Rausch, "Has the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Exceeded its Authority?" *Theological Studies* 62 (2001): 803. A sampling of Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic and Orthodox responses may be found in part two of *Sic and Non: Encountering Dominus Iesus*, eds. Stephen J. Pope and Charles Hefling (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

<sup>96</sup> Francis A. Sullivan, "The Impact of *Dominus Iesus* on Ecumenism," *America* 183, no. 13 (2000): 8-11.

<sup>97</sup> Commenting on the official response of the Catholic Church to BEM, Sullivan wrote: "I find particularly significant the idea that recognition of the ordained ministry and of the ecclesial character of a Christian community are not only indissolubly related, but also mutually related. This clearly means that one can not only begin with a judgment about the ministry in a community and draw conclusions about its ecclesial character; one can also begin with a judgment about its ecclesial character and draw conclusions about its ministry." See *From Apostles to Bishops*, 235.



judgment about the ministry in other communities to the conclusion that they are not churches in the proper sense. We may also argue from the reasons for recognizing the truly ecclesial character of those communities to the fruitfulness and genuineness of their ministry.”<sup>98</sup> Luis Bermejo also has agreed that it is methodologically appropriate to argue from the reality of the community to the reality of the ministry:

Community and ministry are marked by a simultaneous interdependence, and hence one can legitimately proceed from the reality of the ministry (or its deficiency) to the reality of the Church (or its absence)... ; or, contrariwise, one can deduce the reality of the ministry from the previously acknowledged ‘ecclesiality’ of the community....<sup>99</sup>

Along with Luis Bermejo, J.M.R. Tillard and John Burkhard have also taken exception to the idea that the ministry is the “instrumental cause” of the community.<sup>100</sup> They argue that the ontological reality of the ministry is dependent on (or interdependent with) the ontological reality of the community. Bermejo stated that “the ontological reality of the ministry depends on the ontology of the Christian community, itself dependent on the action of the Lord and his Spirit. The ministry cannot be envisaged except as a structure within the community, not above it, and in this sense the ministry does not create the community; it is rather placed within it by the Lord himself.”<sup>101</sup> Similarly, J.M.R. Tillard said, “The community depends on ministry, but ministry also

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>99</sup> Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion*, 302.

<sup>100</sup> Bermejo wrote: “In the past the ministry has been conceived as that ‘instrumental cause’ of the community, as if the ministry had an independent existence of its own, prior to the creation and existence of the community. The New Testament, on the other hand, compels us to view the ministry *in* the community, as means given to it by God for its own upbuilding....” Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion*, 301-02.

<sup>101</sup> Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion*, 302.

depends on the community.”<sup>102</sup> Finally Burkhard adds, “The church itself is primary, and ministry serves the church and does not found it first of all.”<sup>103</sup>

Given the ontological interdependence of the community with the reality of the ministry, theologians such as George Tavard, Luis Bermejo and Susan Wood argue that it is more methodologically appropriate to base recognition of ministries on the prior recognition of a Christian community as a “church.” Thus Tavard wrote, “The primary question is recognition of Church, not of ministry. Once Church has been seen, ministry has also been seen at work.”<sup>104</sup> In addition, Bermejo turned the issue of the validity of Anglican orders on its head when he said, “The recognition of a truly apostolic ministry and a genuine Eucharist...should come...*after* [Anglican] communities have been recognized as Churches, rather than the other way around.”<sup>105</sup> Susan Wood likewise observes that it is the “recognition of ecclesial communities [which] leads to the recognition of ministry rather than the other way around.”<sup>106</sup>

Another criticism of the Catholic Church’s method for evaluating ecclesiality and “church” is that official Catholic documents have consistently failed to consider the subjective “ecclesial vitality” of a Christian community as a determinant of whether such a community is properly a “church.” In fact, this dimension of ecclesial life seems to have been completely neglected altogether. Thus, Richard Gaillardetz writes, “No conciliar document, nor any postconciliar document that I am aware of, has attended to a somewhat different perspective on ecclesial life, namely the more subjective ‘ecclesial

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<sup>102</sup> J.M.R. Tillard, “Recognition of Ministries: What is the Real Question?” *One in Christ* 21 (1985): 33.

<sup>103</sup> Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 244.

<sup>104</sup> George H. Tavard, “The Recognition of Ministry: What is the Priority?” *One in Christ* 23 (1987): 35.

<sup>105</sup> Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion*, 301.

<sup>106</sup> Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders* (Collegville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000): 78.

vitality' of a particular Christian community.”<sup>107</sup> Theologians such as Baum and Gaillardetz increasingly question whether ecclesial reality is sufficiently understood only in reference to whether a community merely possesses the entire array of objective “means of sanctification and truth” necessary for being an institutionally complete “church.” Baum, for example, wrote, “To evaluate the ecclesial reality of a Christian community...it is not enough to consider it from the institutional point of view.”<sup>108</sup> Gaillardetz also notes that an institutionally complete Christian community may, for example, fail to take advantage of such objective possessions in their subjective ecclesial life.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, as Sullivan acknowledges, an institutionally deficient non-Catholic community may have a greater ecclesial vitality than many Catholic communities: “There is no question of denying that a non-Catholic community, perhaps lacking much in the order of sacrament, can achieve the *res*, the communion of the life of Christ in faith, hope and love, more perfectly than many a Catholic community.”<sup>110</sup>

It would appear that according to the theologians' views presented above, the more important aspect of ecclesiality is not the mere existence of certain objective means of sanctification and truth but the appropriation of these means in the life of the community.<sup>111</sup> This point has been made by some theologians through the use of

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<sup>107</sup> Richard Gaillardetz, “The Church of Christ and the Churches: Is the Vatican Retreating from Ecumenism?” *America* 197, no. 5 (August 27th, 2007): 19.

<sup>108</sup> Gregory Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of Other Churches,” in *The Church and Ecumenism*, Concilium 4, ed. Hans Küng (New York: Paulist Press, 1965): 44.

<sup>109</sup> Gaillardetz, “The Church of Christ and the Churches,” 19.

<sup>110</sup> Francis A. Sullivan, “*Subsistit In*: The Significance of Vatican II's Decision to Say of the Church of Christ not that it 'is,' but that it 'subsists in' the Roman Catholic Church,” *One in Christ* 22 (1986):120.

<sup>111</sup> Gaillardetz writes: “However, a review of the history of Christianity suggests that the genuine flourishing of ecclesial life has seldom been as dependent on possession of the quantitative fullness of means of salvation as on the extent to which a given community has appropriated certain of these means in its pastoral life.” Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 168-9.

historical, theoretical or borderline cases of ecclesial life in order to demonstrate the problems of judging ecclesiality and “church” primarily according to institutional criteria. Thus, Gaillardetz appeals to Reformation history to argue that the essence of ecclesiality lies in the vitality of ecclesial life:

When one compares the atrophied state of Catholic sacramental life and the shameful corruption of the Renaissance papacy on the eve of the Reformation with the early vitality of the churches of the Reformation, is an assessment of which communion possessed the greater number of ‘means of salvation’ really helpful?<sup>112</sup>

Another example given by Gaillardetz is worth quoting in full:

Imagine a neighborhood with two churches: Grace Lutheran and St. Bernadette Catholic parish. According to the council’s teaching, the Lutheran congregation would be lacking some specific ‘means of sanctification and truth’ available, in principle, to St. Bernadette’s. Presumably, they do not have access to a universal ministry of unity (the papacy), the sacrament of reconciliation or the full reality of the Eucharist. Yet Grace Lutheran Church might be fostering a community that emphasizes Christian fellowship, hospitality and the dignity of one’s baptismal calling. Church leaders might stress the necessity of being biblically literate and living with fidelity and passion, a biblical vision of discipleship. On the other hand, St. Bernadette’s might be a community where Christian hospitality is almost completely absent and genuine fellowship minimal, a community in which baptism is simply a christening ritual performed on infants, where the Scriptures are poorly proclaimed and the homilies are filled with arcane, pious references and silly jokes but say little about the concrete demands of discipleship in daily life. In this scenario we must grant the possibility that Grace Lutheran Church, although technically lacking ecclesial ‘fullness,’ might in fact be fostering a form of Christian communal life that more effectively brings them into communion with Christ than does St. Bernadette’s.<sup>113</sup>

Non-Catholic theologians have voiced similar criticisms. Miroslav Volf, a Free Church theologian, argues against denying the full ecclesiality of the Free Churches using the following hypothetical example:

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<sup>112</sup> Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 169.

<sup>113</sup> Gaillardetz, “The Church of Christ and the Churches,” 19–20.

Let me illustrate this difficulty by referring to a situation that, although doubtless atypical, must nonetheless be the touchstone of any ecclesiology precisely because it is a borderline case. Should, for example, a Catholic or Orthodox diocese whose members are inclined more to superstition than to faith and who identify with the church more for nationalistic reasons—should such a diocese be viewed as a church, while a Baptist congregation that has preserved its faith through the crucible of persecution *not* be considered such? Would not an understanding of ecclesiality that leads to such a conclusion take us to the brink of absurdity?<sup>114</sup>

In summary, much of the theological community today has called for the Catholic Church to reconsider its basic approach to understanding and defining ecclesiality and church. I find it noteworthy that theologians such as Gaillardetz and Volf (among others) hold that to exclude the aspect of “ecclesial vitality” or fruitfulness of a community in evaluating whether such a community is truly a “church” is at least theologically unhelpful (Gaillardetz), if not absurd (Volf).

### *2.1.2 Other Criteria for Assessing Ecclesiality and “Church”*

In searching for more adequate criteria for evaluating ecclesiality and church, several theologians and ecumenical dialogues have emphasized anew that the fundamental aspect of ecclesiality consists in the communion or fellowship between the community and God. Gaillardetz, for example, reminds us that the innermost reality of the church consists in its participation in the triune life of God: “The Church shares in the mystery of God to the extent that it participates in God’s saving work on behalf of humankind.... [The church’s] very existence depends on its relationship to God through

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<sup>114</sup> Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998): 133-4.

Christ and in the Spirit.”<sup>115</sup> Likewise the recent ecumenical statements in which Roman Catholics have participated emphasize the church as constituted by the fellowship or *koinonia* within the life of the triune God. The statement “Church and Justification” (1993) from the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission is pertinent here:

However one looks at the church, whether as ‘people of God’ or ‘body of Christ’ or ‘temple of the Holy Spirit,’ it is rooted in the inseparable communion or *koinonia* of the three divine persons and is thereby itself constituted as *koinonia*. It is not primarily the communion of believers with each other which makes the church *koinonia*; it is primarily and fundamentally the communion of believers with God, the triune God whose innermost being is *koinonia*. And yet the communion of believers with the triune God is inseparable from their communion with each other.<sup>116</sup>

Renewed emphasis on this essential understanding of “church” has led some theologians since Vatican II to reconsider how the ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christian communities might be more adequately evaluated. Thus, Baum in 1965 argued that defining ecclesiality in terms of the communion or fellowship between God and the local community created by that “conversion of heart which the Spirit produces through Word and sacrament” provides a more fundamental basis for evaluating whether a certain Christian community is “truly and fully Church.”<sup>117</sup> He wrote, “If, therefore, we begin our ecclesiology with a consideration of the local congregation...then Church signifies the actual family of men created by Word and sacrament at one place, and Church universal signifies the family or communion of all the Churches of God. This approach throws new

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<sup>115</sup> Richard Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry within an Ordered Communion,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003): 31.

<sup>116</sup> “Church and Justification,” in *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982–1998*, eds. Jeffrey Gros, Harding Meyer and William G. Rusch (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000): 503. Cited also in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 184.

<sup>117</sup> Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of Other Churches,” 45.

light on what Church and ecclesial reality are....”<sup>118</sup> Avery Dulles in 1974 also noted that some non-Catholic communities may rightly be called “churches” according this understanding of ecclesiality:

The more important aspect of the Church...is the vertical or spiritual dimension of communion with God. Speaking from this perspective, even a Roman Catholic who holds that union with Rome is necessary for the institutional integrity of any particular church may still say that some communions not in union with Rome may, from a spiritual or mystical standpoint, merit to be called Churches.<sup>119</sup>

Likewise, Cardinal Willebrands, in 1987 wrote, “Indeed, if the church is fundamentally this communion with the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit, we can see that on the one hand the depth of this communion determines the depth of incorporation in the church....”<sup>120</sup> Reflecting further on this insight, Willebrands suggested that “some communities may already be *of* the church without yet *being* churches (that is, having an authentic eucharist) and without establishing links of horizontal communion with the Catholic Church. Belonging to the church turns essentially on the relation which comes down from God....”<sup>121</sup>

How then are we to recognize this fundamental ecclesiality if the ecclesiality of the community is to be starting point rather than the conclusion of an evaluation of a community’s ministry? Francis Sullivan suggested that the recognition of shared communion could form a basic criterion of evaluating another community’s ecclesiality. Speaking of the Anglican and Lutheran communities, he wrote, “If one asks where they find the reasons for a positive assessment of the ecclesial character of the Anglican and

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>119</sup> Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church: Expanded Edition* (New York: Doubleday, 1987): 146.

<sup>120</sup> Cardinal J. Willebrands, “Vatican II’s Ecclesiology of Communion,” *Origins* 17, no. 2 (May 28, 1987): 32.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. Emphasis mine.

Lutheran communities, I have no doubt they would reply that such reasons are based on the growing recognition of the degree of communion that exists between them and the Catholic Church.”<sup>122</sup> Fruitfulness of ministry in leading its members to salvation is another way of recognizing genuine ecclesiality:

One implication, which certainly needs deeper exploration, concerns the ecclesial character of communities that have not retained the episcopate, but which for centuries have led numerous Christians to grace and salvation through the effective preaching of the Word of God and a fruitful pastoral ministry. I do not believe we have done full justice to such communities when we simply declare that they are not churches in the proper sense.<sup>123</sup>

While such criteria for recognizing ecclesiality are crucial, the question remains as to what degree of communion or fruitfulness in ministry constitutes a Christian community a “church” in the theological sense of the word. In other words, is there a fullness or quality of ecclesiality that must be achieved in order for a community to truly merit the title of “church”?

Catholic theologians have proposed different answers to this question. Baum, for example, proposed in 1965 concrete criteria for identifying a Christian community as a “church.” He suggested that if a non-Catholic Christian community listens faithfully to the gospel, shares in the breaking of bread, and otherwise behaves as a living fellowship of Christians, then because of the reality of that living fellowship, this community deserves to be called a “church” in the theological sense of the word, even if we happen to regret the institutional imperfections from which it suffers.<sup>124</sup> For Baum, “a Christian

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<sup>122</sup> Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 235.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 236. More recently (2010) Sullivan writes: “An ecclesial ministry that lacks the sacrament of order can still be fruitful of grace and salvation.” See Francis Sullivan, “‘Ecclesial Communities’ and their ‘Defectus Sacramenti Ordinis,’” *Ecumenical Trends* 39, no. 3 (March 2010): 7.

<sup>124</sup> Baum, “The Ecclesial Reality of Other Churches,” 44.



community is more truly Church when it is more transformed into God's people, into his family, into a spiritual brotherhood of faith and charity.”<sup>125</sup>

Cardinal Willebrands’ concept of “ecclesial type,” which he first put forward in a 1970 address in Cambridge, has also been widely lauded as a helpful way of evaluating the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. Willebrands suggested that “within the communion of the one and only Church of Christ” there exists a plurality of *typoi* or “ecclesial types.” He defined an ecclesial *typos* in the sense of a general form or character of a Christian tradition.<sup>126</sup> More specifically, the reality of a *typos* is present where “there is a long coherent tradition, commanding men’s love and loyalty, creating and sustaining a harmonious and organic whole of complementary elements, each of which support and strengthens the other....”<sup>127</sup> John Burkhard has concluded that Protestant and Anglican communities fit this definition of an ecclesial type: “After almost five hundred years of existence, and in the face of clear evidence of vitality of faith, life, and faithful witness to Christ, the major churches that have issued from the Reformation must be acknowledged as ‘ecclesial types.’... Eventually, Roman Catholics have to come to terms with whether or not these ‘ecclesial types’ can rightly be called ‘churches.’”<sup>128</sup>

In 1987 Bermejo argued that all Christian communities which participate in the mystery of Christ’s presence through the constitutive elements found in the New Testament (such as the Spirit, faith, baptism, the word of God, the Eucharist and apostolic

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>126</sup> See “Cardinal Willebrand’s Address in Cambridge, England, January 18, 1970,” in *Call to Full Unity: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, 1966-1983*, eds. Joseph W. Witmer and John Robert Wright (Washington, DC: Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, U.S. Catholic Conference, 1986): 51.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 226.

ministry) ought to be designated as a “church” in the theological sense of the word, despite any sacramental or institutional imperfections which these communities may have.<sup>129</sup> This conclusion is based on his christological understanding of ecclesiality:

The diverse elements that constitute the Church are nothing but forms of Christ’s presence.... They constitute the cohesive force, the unifying bond of the Church precisely because they are the means through which Christ makes himself present to his Church: the ecclesiological rests on the christological.<sup>130</sup>

These ecclesial elements are, according to Bermejo, “*one single presence* in different degrees of intensity and of ontological density.”<sup>131</sup> Thus Bermejo argued that the dispute about whether to extend the designation of “church” to Protestant and Anglican communities is not merely a secondary issue or a question of semantics, but is rather about properly appreciating the extent to which these communities participate in the mystery of Christ’s one and undivided presence in his church.<sup>132</sup>

George Tavard also suggested that the “churchhood” of a Christian community may be discerned through an analysis of a community’s awareness of being the church. He wrote that “the way to such a recognition [of churchhood in a community] is the analysis of awareness of being the Church, an awareness which is clearly not reserved to the Orthodox and the Catholic faithful, *even though it may be expressed differently and take different forms among other Christians.*”<sup>133</sup> Significantly, this awareness of being the church may come through, among other things, the fruitfulness of the spiritual gifts found in a community. Tavard asked rhetorically: “Can there be, in a Christian

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<sup>129</sup> Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion*, 310.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>133</sup> Tavard, “The Recognition of Ministry,” 34. Emphasis mine.

community that is not governed by the successor to Peter, so many of those spiritual gifts that they do not function as alien resources, but, *by their convergence and fruitfulness*, enable the members of such a community to experience the Church on the basis of its subsistence in their community?<sup>134</sup>

More recently (1997), Joseph Komonchak has suggested that the reality of “church” consists in the reception of the gospel by faith. Where the gospel is believed the church is present:

The apostolic Gospel comes from the power of the Spirit and is received by faith and where this event of communication takes place, the Church is born again. Where this event does not take place, where the Gospel is preached in vain, no Church arises. Where the Gospel ceases to be believed, the Church ceases to exist. The whole ontology of the Church—the real ‘objective’ existence of the Church—consists in the reception by faith of the Gospel. Reception is constitutive of the Church.<sup>135</sup>

This definition of “church” is not unlike the definition proposed in the ecumenical document of the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission entitled, “All Under One Christ” (1980). Therein they define a local church as follows: “By church we mean the communion of those whom God gathers together through Christ in the Holy Spirit, by the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, and the ministry instituted by him for this purpose.”<sup>136</sup>

Theologians such as Avery Dulles and Susan Wood approach the problem of which communities merit the title of “church” from the perspective of sacramental

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid. Emphasis mine.

<sup>135</sup> Joseph Komonchak, “The Epistemology of Reception,” *The Jurist* 57 (1997): 193. Cited in Gaillardetz, *The Church in the Making*, 160.

<sup>136</sup> “All Under One Christ,” in *Growth in Agreement: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level*, eds. Harding Meyer and Lukas Vischer (New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1984): 244. Cited in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 180-81.

ecclesiology. In Catholic sacramental ecclesiology, “church” is primarily a term designating the sign aspect of the salvific presence of Jesus Christ. In 1974 Avery Dulles wrote:

The sacrament of the Church is constituted by the symbolic expression, in tangible form, of the salvific presence of Jesus Christ. This symbolization takes place through a multitude of actions, such as confessions of faith, the reading of Scripture, the celebration of the sacraments, and caritative service in the name of Christ. Groups of Christians who do these things are visibly consecrated communities of believers; they are believers who by their conduct visibly show forth the continuing efficacy of Christ’s saving work....<sup>137</sup>

In the sacramental understanding of the church it is easier to see how Protestant and Anglican communities theologically merit the name of “church” despite any institutional or sacramental imperfections. For, as Avery Dulles wrote, “They are visible communities in which Christ is invoked and in which God is worshipped in the name of Christ. This fact alone gives them a certain sacramental status. They are signs of God’s redemptive act in Christ, places in which Christian faith and charity come to a certain historical tangibility.”<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, as Susan Wood has noted, the sacraments of the church are signs of the church and have the church as their referent. The sacraments “are ‘the essential functions that bring into activity the very essence of the Church.’ The moments of the seven sacraments [and not just the Eucharist] are, then, the moments of self-actualization of the Church.”<sup>139</sup>

Finally, while several Catholic theologians have thus attempted to suggest a more fundamental and adequate understanding of ecclesial reality, the Eucharist continues to

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<sup>137</sup> Dulles, *Models of the Church*, 149.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 22.

be the ecclesial event in which the church is most visibly and profoundly expressed. As Gaillardetz said, “In the eucharistic *synaxis*, the Christian community proclaims in word and celebrates in ritual and symbol its most profound reality, its truest identity as a people whose lives are being conformed to that of Christ by the celebration of the paschal mystery.”<sup>140</sup> Likewise, Susan Wood wrote, “The Church is most visibly a sign of grace and union with Christ in the Eucharist since the Eucharist is ‘indivisibly Christological and ecclesiological.’”<sup>141</sup> Thus the celebration of the eucharistic mystery remains central to the Catholic understanding of ecclesiality and church.

## 2.2 *Theological and Ecumenical Developments in Eucharist and Ministry*

Not only have some theologians questioned the Catholic Church’s understanding of ecclesiality and its method for evaluating the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities; but they have also critiqued several aspects of ecclesiology and sacramental theology that have been foundational to the Catholic Church’s negative judgment on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. Many of these critiques are both historical and theological in nature.

### 2.2.1 *Apostolicity and the Primacy of Community in Apostolic Succession*

As noted above the Catholic Church teaches that it is necessary for the presiding minister in the celebration of the Eucharist to be ordained by someone in the apostolic succession of bishops in order that he may bring into being the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery. Yet there are serious historical and theological problems with the traditional understanding of apostolic succession as an unbroken chain

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<sup>140</sup> Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry,” 33.

<sup>141</sup> Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 22.

of episcopal ordinations stretching back to the apostles. In 1970 Harry McSorley observed, “Historical studies have found so many examples to the contrary that it is no longer defensible to maintain the opinion that the only competent ministers of the Eucharist, according to the intention of Christ or *de iure divino*, are priests ordained by Bishops who in turn have been ordained by Bishops in a line going back without interruption to the time of the Apostles.”<sup>142</sup> Burkhard likewise stated, “The inadequacy of the older, and what had become the classic, interpretation of apostolic succession as an unbroken chain of valid episcopal ordinations has been largely modified as the principal way of understanding apostolicity. As a result, the image of a chain of episcopal ordinations assuring the validity of ministry that this rather mechanical theory entailed has been largely abandoned.”<sup>143</sup> Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas expressed similar views when he criticized the classic interpretation of apostolic succession as depicting ministry in terms of individual causality and ontology without any relational connection to the community.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Harry J. McSorley, “Eucharistic Sharing: A New State of the Question for Roman Catholics,” *The Ecumenical Review* 22, no. 2 (April 1970): 117.

<sup>143</sup> Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 39.

<sup>144</sup> Zizioulas wrote: “Apostolic succession has again become a problem in theology because of an approach to the ministry in terms of causality and objectified ontology. The bishop having acquired the status of an office, regardless of his position in the community, became in the theology of apostolic succession an *individual* who is linked with the apostles through a chain of individual ordinations, and who is thus transmitting to the other ministers below him grace and authority out of what he has received and possesses.” See John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press): 238. See also Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 78-9: “An overly physical and linear-historical interpretation of [apostolic] succession as a succession of laying on of hands...cannot historically be substantiated for the earliest historical period.” See also Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 13: “To speak of ‘an unbroken line of episcopal ordination from Christ through the apostles’ suggests that Christ ordained the apostles as bishops, and that the apostles ordained a bishop for each of the churches they founded, so that by the time the apostles died, each Christian church was being led by a bishop as successor to an apostle. There are serious problems with such a theory of the link between apostles and bishops.” See also Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion*, 303: “As regards the ministry, the really essential point is not the reconstruction of a mythical unbroken line of apostolic succession, as if the Protestant

Given the rejection by these theologians of the classical (but still official) understanding of apostolic succession, how are we to understand apostolicity and apostolic succession? For some theologians and ecumenists, apostolicity and apostolic succession primarily refer to a community's continuity and identity with the early Christian communities.<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, since Vatican II, several theologians and ecumenical dialogues have emphasized the "substantive" dimension of apostolicity, which refers to the whole fabric of life of a Christian community rather than just continuity in ecclesiastical office. Burkhard described this theological recovery of apostolicity:

In short, they [Catholic theologians] realized it was important to look at the concrete life of a community to determine its genuineness. What its doctrines are, its sacred writings, its sacramental practices, its style of leadership, its exercise of charity, its moral principles, its internal discipline, its leadership structure, and so forth—all this must be considered. The community in its entirety and in all its richness must be examined. The focus moved from isolating ecclesiastical office or sacraments or ordinations as the source of a church's apostolicity, to the doctrine, life and praxis of the community itself.<sup>146</sup>

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ministry had to be welded back onto the main pipeline (in any case historians have discovered gaps in the 'unbroken' Catholic line as well), but rather the common theological conception of the ministry that has emerged."

<sup>145</sup> "In general, theologians point to apostolicity as guaranteeing the identity of the church of a later period with the early Christian community." Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 25. See also the document "The Gospel and the Church" of the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission, which states: "The basic intention of the doctrine of apostolic succession is to indicate that, throughout all historical changes in its proclamation and structures, the church is at all time referred back to its apostolic origin," in *Growth in Agreement*, 181. Cited also in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 179.

<sup>146</sup> Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 32. Furthermore, he wrote: "Apostolicity is to be found primarily by examining the full life of a church and not by isolating one element at the expense of all other dimensions. The faith preached by the apostles engendered communities of prayer, worship, service, and witness—communities that reflected on God's Word and the teachings of the Lord Jesus, charismatic as well as permanent ministries, the celebration of the Eucharist, the experience of God's Spirit and living in a way that was open to the Spirit, a lifestyle of discipleship that included acts of justice, forgiveness, penance, and love of neighbor, including one's enemies. One looks for the contours of the life communicated by the risen Lord in apostolic communities." *Ibid.*, 38.

Gaillardetz believes that to assert a community's apostolicity in the substantive sense is "to claim that in and through the church's life a vital connection and fidelity to [the] apostolic message and mission [can] be discerned."<sup>147</sup>

Another insight shared by many theologians and ecumenists since Vatican II is that apostolic succession is primarily an attribute of the whole church. Kilian McDonnell said, "At the core of apostolic succession is the conception that the whole church and each individual member shares in the apostolic succession."<sup>148</sup> Similarly, Zizioulas noted it is the entire community of the church that embodies apostolic community.<sup>149</sup> In addition, many ecumenical documents on apostolic succession give primacy to the apostolicity of the community as a whole. The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), in its statement, "Ministry and Ordination," wrote as early as 1973, "Every individual act of ordination is therefore an expression of the continuing apostolicity and catholicity of the whole Church."<sup>150</sup> Furthermore, "The Porvoo Common Statement" (1993), an influential ecumenical statement from British and Irish Anglicans and Nordic and Baltic Lutherans, one which represented a culmination to date on apostolicity inasmuch as it drew widely from earlier dialogues, stated, "Apostolic succession in the episcopal office is a visible and personal way of focusing the apostolicity of the whole Church."<sup>151</sup> Finally, the 1998 Faith and Order statement, "The

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<sup>147</sup> Richard Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church: A People Called and Sent* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008): 209-210.

<sup>148</sup> Kilian McDonnell, "Ways of Validating Ministry," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 7 (1970): 229.

<sup>149</sup> Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 197.

<sup>150</sup> ARCIC I, "Ministry and Ordination," in *Growth in Agreement*, 82-3. Cited in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 169.

<sup>151</sup> The Council for Christian Unity of the General Synod of the Church of England, *Together in Mission and Ministry: The Porvoo Common Statement with Essays on Church and Ministry in Northern Europe*:



Nature and Purpose of the Church,” is representative of many ecumenical statements on apostolic succession:

The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole. In the course of history, the Church has developed several means for the handing on of apostolic truth through time, in different circumstances and cultural contexts: the scriptural canon, dogma, liturgical order, structures wider than the level of local communities. The ministry of the ordained is to serve in a specific way the apostolic continuity of the Church as a whole. In this context, succession in ministry is a means of serving the apostolic continuity of the Church.<sup>152</sup>

In summary, for many theologians and ecumenists, apostolic succession is primarily concerned with the continuity of the apostolic life of the whole community, i.e. its substantive apostolicity. Episcopal succession is necessary for expressing and preserving the apostolicity of the whole church in this more substantive sense.

An aspect of the classic understanding of apostolic succession is that individual bishops are part of an unbroken chain of episcopal ordinations stretching back to an individual apostle. Yet, apostolic succession in episcopal office as taught by Vatican II (*Lumen Gentium* #20) refers not to the bishops succeeding to an individual apostle but rather to the episcopal college as a whole succeeding to the mission of the apostolic college.<sup>153</sup> The Roman Catholic/Lutheran bilateral document, “Facing Unity” (1984), also expressed this understanding of episcopal succession: “All this shows that the

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*Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches* (London: Church House Publishing, 1993): 26, #46. Cited in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 194.

<sup>152</sup> WCC, *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998), #88. Cited in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 190. See also *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, in *Growth in Agreement*, 491; and *The Porvoo Common Statement*, 23, #39.

<sup>153</sup> See Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 38: “Apostolic succession of bishops is not an affair of a historically unbroken chain of episcopal leaders, but of proper, sacramental succession to the leadership of an apostolic community....” See also Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 194-5.

apostolic succession is not really to be understood as a succession of one individual to another, but rather as a succession in the church, to an episcopal see and to membership of the episcopal college, as shown by the lists of bishops.”<sup>154</sup>

Understanding apostolic succession in terms of the episcopal college succeeding to the mission of the apostolic college has implications for recognizing apostolic succession in Protestant and Anglican communities. As Susan Wood has noted, this view implies that recognition of membership of a community’s bishop in the episcopal college would constitute recognition of apostolic succession. The advantage to this understanding of apostolic succession is that “apostolic succession remains personal but avoids an overly physical and linear-historical interpretation of succession as a succession of laying on of hands, which cannot historically be substantiated for the earliest historical period.”<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, Wood suggested that it may be more consistent to speak of “communion” within the college of bishops rather than “membership.” She wrote, “Just as there are varying degrees of communion between ecclesial communities, there are varying degrees of communion among bishops. Since the bishop functions as the representative of the ecclesial community, one would expect these two relationships to be parallel.”<sup>156</sup>

The implications for recognizing apostolic succession in Protestant and Anglican communities in this framework are twofold. On the one hand, the problem of recognition of apostolic succession is transferred from an historical consideration of the ritual validity

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<sup>154</sup> “Facing Unity,” in *Growth in Agreement II*, 468. Cited in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 183.

<sup>155</sup> Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 78-79.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

of episcopal ordinations (as in the case of *Apostolicae Curae*) to a consideration of the present-day recognition of communion between Christian communities and of communion between bishops as heads of their respective communities. On the other hand, because there are varying degrees of communion between communities, it would make sense to recognize various degrees of fullness of apostolic succession in ministry. Such an understanding of apostolic succession transcends simplistic binary approaches to apostolic succession in ministry (i.e. a ministry has either maintained apostolic succession or it has not).

Finally, significant for this dissertation is the fact that some Catholic theologians have argued that the New Testament ministry of apostolic oversight (*episkopé*), which Gaillardetz defines as “a ministry concerned both with ensuring the integrity of the apostolic faith and manifesting a communion among the churches,” may be realized in ministerial forms other than the traditional threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon.<sup>157</sup> J.M.R. Tillard, for example, wrote:

It may happen that we shall discover how, under different forms and ideas, at least the main ideas of apostolic *episkopé* have reappeared in such communities [i.e., those deriving from the magisterial Reformation]. For it is not necessary for the threefold ministry—deacon, presbyter, bishop—to be attested in the classical form for apostolic *episkopé* to exist.<sup>158</sup>

Karl Rahner also has suggested that the episcopal office could be exercised by a collegiate body: “As I see it, we could in principle and as a matter of abstract speculation even go a step further and put the hypothesis that it would not be unequivocally contrary to the Catholic doctrine of the episcopal office to say that this episcopal authority could

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<sup>157</sup> Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 271.

<sup>158</sup> Tillard, “Recognition of Ministries,” 38-39.

be borne by a *collegium*.”<sup>159</sup> If the Catholic Church could acknowledge apostolic *episkopé* as existing outside of episcopal succession, then would not the reality of the eucharistic mystery in Protestant and Anglican communities and hence their status as “churches” need to be reevaluated insofar as the theological basis for viewing their orders as invalid no longer would obtain? Hans Küng asked this very question as early as 1968. After suggesting that episcopal ordination via a series of imposition of hands is not the only way to think of apostolic succession, he then asked: “Would we [if other forms of apostolic succession were indeed recognized] not have every reason to judge apostolic succession and the validity of the eucharistic celebration in those Churches which are not part of this ‘chain’ of ordinations in a different and much more positive manner?”<sup>160</sup>

A primary reason for suggesting that apostolic *episkopé* may now exist in different forms is that early Christianity, much like today, also possessed a multiplicity of ministerial forms. Thus Gaillardetz argues:

Can we acknowledge that in the first fifty to one hundred years of the church the exercise of apostolic oversight (*episcope*)...took a multiplicity of forms, sometimes exercised collegially and at other times by one minister in the form of a monoepiscopate? If so, then the possibility might exist, in theory, for such a diversity of forms to be acknowledged today without jeopardizing the essential characteristics of the necessary ministry of apostolic oversight.<sup>161</sup>

It is important to note that these Catholic theologians are not suggesting that apostolic *episkopé* exists outside of apostolic succession. McDonnell said, “There can be no

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<sup>159</sup> Karl Rahner, “Aspects of the Episcopal Office,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 14 (New York: Seabury, 1976): 191.

<sup>160</sup> Hans Küng, “What is the Essence of Apostolic Succession?” in *Apostolic Succession, Rethinking a Barrier to Unity*, Concilium 34, ed. Hans Küng (New York: Paulist Press, 1968): 35.

<sup>161</sup> Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 271. See also McDonnell: “However dear the presbyteral and episcopal conception of the church, this conception must not close off the other avenues to the apostolic faith, life and authority, avenues of access which existed in New Testament times.” McDonnell, “Ways of Validating Ministry,” 245.

apostolic ministries apart from apostolic succession, but there can be apostolic ministries apart from the episcopal tradition, which is another way of saying that apostolic succession cannot be identified without qualification exclusively with episcopal succession.”<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, while some may argue that non-episcopal forms of apostolic *episkopé* relativizes the episcopacy, Hans Küng argued that the episcopacy would nevertheless “remain an impressive sign of the apostolic succession in the pastoral line and therefore a sign of the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of the Church.”<sup>163</sup>

Various ecumenical documents also speak of apostolic *episkopé* existing in non-episcopal forms. Thus the agreed upon statement of the U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue, “Church as Koinonia of Salvation” (1995), acknowledged that “whether a particular minister or church serves the church’s apostolic mission does not depend only upon the presence of such a succession of episcopal consecration, as if its absence would negate the apostolicity of the church’s teaching and mission.”<sup>164</sup> “The Porvoo Common Statement” (1993) similarly said, “Faithfulness to the apostolic calling of the whole Church is carried by more than one means of continuity.”<sup>165</sup> Finally, the WCC document, “The Nature and Purpose of the Church” (1998), asked both episcopal and non-episcopal Christian communities to acknowledge the existence of apostolic *episkopé* in one another.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> McDonnell, “Ways of Validating Ministry,” 230

<sup>163</sup> Küng, “What is the Essence of Apostolic Succession?” 35.

<sup>164</sup> Randall Lee and Jeffrey Gros, eds., *Church as Koinonia of Salvation: Its Structures and Ministries*, Lutheran and Catholics in Dialogue 10 (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005): 39. Cited in Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 271.

<sup>165</sup> “The Porvoo Common Statement,” #52. Cited in Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 195.

<sup>166</sup> “Churches who exercise *episkopé* primarily or even uniquely in synodal form and churches for whom the office of bishop is central for the exercise of *episkopé* are asked to recognize that there is a ministry of

### 2.2.2 *The Relational Aspect of the Sacrament of Order*

I noted above that the Catholic Church's classical teaching is that the sacrament of order configures the ordained minister to Christ by endowing him with a sacramental character and a spiritual power that enables him to bring into being the eucharistic mystery. In this understanding of the sacrament of order, described by Maurice Villian in 1968, the episcopal ordinand, in receiving the fullness of the ministerial priesthood, also receives from Christ the power to ordain in his turn while the priestly ordinand does not.<sup>167</sup> Villian described the typical Catholic appraisal of Protestant ministry in light of this understanding of holy orders: "As to the Protestant pastor, who receives it from one or more already ordained ministers but outside the line of hierarchical descent, he is considered to be cut off from this succession and the acts of his ministry are, apart from baptism, held to be invalid."<sup>168</sup>

Scholars have begun to question the classical understanding of holy orders on the basis of historical studies beginning in the twentieth century.<sup>169</sup> These studies have shown that historically, extraordinary ministers presided at the ordination of both bishops

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*episcopé* in both cases. Churches which have preserved episcopal succession are challenged to recognize both the faithful continuity with the apostolic faith as well as the apostolic content of the ordained ministry which exists in churches which have not maintained such succession and also the existence in these churches of a ministry of *episcopé* in various forms. Churches without the episcopal succession, and living in faithful continuity with the apostolic faith and mission, are asked to consider that the continuity with the Church of the apostles can find expression in the successive laying on of hands by bishops and that such a sign can serve that continuity itself." WCC, *The Nature and Purpose of the Church*, commentary on #39. Cited in Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 272.

<sup>167</sup> Maurice Villain, "Can There Be Apostolic Succession outside the Chain of Imposition of Hands?" in *Apostolic Succession, Rethinking a Barrier to Unity*, Concilium 34, ed. Hans Küng (New York: Paulist Press, 1968): 87.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Kenan Osborne, "Envisioning a Theology of Ordained and Lay Ministry: Lay/Ordained Ministry—Current Issues of Ambiguity," in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003): 207.

and priests.<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless this scholarship has not significantly impacted official post-conciliar Catholic teaching on the sacrament of order. As Kenan Osborne noted, “Most official documents of the Catholic Church since Vatican II continue to speak of bishop and priest in ways that do not adequately reflect the historical process of episcopal and presbyteral development.”<sup>171</sup>

According to Burkhard, the western practice of absolute ordinations (i.e. ordination without a pastoral charge for a community) eventually “led to reinforcement of the idea that ordination had to do primarily with the individual ordinand and the imparting of certain powers to him independent of a pastoral charge. This led to the theory that the priesthood resided in the powers of consecrating the Eucharist and other sacramental powers.”<sup>172</sup> Yet, the meaning of “sacred power” (*potestas*) in the Catholic tradition has proved to be very ambiguous and difficult to interpret. Harry McSorley has made clear that *potestas* is:

a word with several senses: physical, spiritual (virtue; grace), moral (influence), social, political, ecclesial.... When it is said that only a bishop has the power to ordain, or only one with the power of priesthood can consecrate, does this mean physical power? A spiritual power possessed by no one else in the church in any way? Does it mean authorization? Or does it mean the ability to ordain or

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<sup>170</sup> Harry McSorley wrote: “Bishops were not always consecrated through the laying on of hands by other bishops....” In support of this claim, he cites J. Colson, *L’évêque dans les communautés primitives* (Paris 1951) and Protestant historian W. Telfer, “Episcopal Succession in Egypt,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 3 (1952): 1-13. See Harry McSorley, “Protestant Eucharist Reality and Lack of Orders,” *The Ecumenist* 5 (1967): 69. Susan Wood said, “Documentation suggests that the valid ordination of a priest by another simple priest under certain conditions does not appear to be impossible.” Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 66. Wood cites Karl Rahner, “The Area Bishop: Some Theological Reflections,” *Theological Investigations* 17 (New York: Crossroads, 1981): 166. Francis Sullivan, on the other hand, suggests the hypothesis that ordinations of presbyters by other presbyters prior to universal establishment of the monoepiscopate in the second century handed on in an undifferentiated whole all ministerial powers, including those that would later be reserved only to the episcopal office. See Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 224.

<sup>171</sup> Kenan Osborne, “Envisioning a Theology of Ordained and Lay Ministry,” 221.

<sup>172</sup> Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 36.

consecrate lawfully and with ecclesial approval in order to serve and to manifest the unity of the church?<sup>173</sup>

Furthermore, McSorley noted that *Lumen Gentium* refers to the sacred power of the ordained (articles 10 and 18) but even in that document there is no formal definition of this *potestas*.<sup>174</sup> Thus, McSorley sees no need to interpret this idea of power as anything other than that of sacramental “authorization”: “[The *potestas* of Vatican II] is an ecclesial authorization or empowerment to lead the worshipping community in such a way that the order and unity of the church are manifested.”<sup>175</sup> Thomas Rausch agreed with this view, noting that the “real meaning of ordination is to be found not in sacred power, a concept open to misunderstanding, but in sacramental authorization.”<sup>176</sup> What this implies is that traditionally invalid ministry in Protestant and Anglican communities may not necessarily be lacking a kind of individual spiritual or ontological capacity to bring into being the reality of the eucharistic mystery but rather may involve simply celebrating the Eucharist without the proper ecclesial authorization required to fully manifest the order and unity of the church. Such a possibility has important implications for the reality of the eucharistic mystery in Protestant and Anglican communities and hence the status of these communities as “churches.”

Some Catholic theologians today are also moving away from the conception of the ordained as *individually* possessing a sacred power for consecrating the Eucharist or

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<sup>173</sup> Harry McSorley, “The Roman Catholic Doctrine of the Competent Minister of the Eucharist in Ecumenical Perspective,” in *Eucharist and Ministry, Lutherans and Roman Catholics in Dialogue 4*, eds. Paul Empie and T. Austin Murphy (Washington, DC: USCC Publications, 1970): 124-5.

<sup>174</sup> McSorley, “Protestant Eucharist Reality and Lack of Orders,” 69.

<sup>175</sup> McSorley, “The Roman Catholic Doctrine of the Competent Minister of the Eucharist,” 135.

<sup>176</sup> Thomas Rausch, “Ministry and Ministries,” in *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood: Theologies of Lay and Ordained Ministry*, ed. Susan K. Wood (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003): 64.



ordaining others. The “sacramental character” imparted to the minister in ordination is now seen rather in the reconfiguration of the priest into a new ecclesial relationship rather than the bestowal of new powers on the minister as an individual. Gaillardetz criticized the classic understanding of ordination as an impartation of a sacramental character or sacred power upon the ordinand: “Many Western treatments of sacramental character have succumbed to the limitations of...substance ontology, namely that it makes ontological claims on the individual abstracted from his or her relational existence.”<sup>177</sup> He argued that the ontological change in ordination “is grounded not in the conferral of powers on an individual but on the reconfiguration of the person into a new ecclesial relation.”<sup>178</sup> Susan Wood also has made clear that the sacramental character of the ordained is fundamentally relational:

Thus the sacramental character establishes a specific relationship to both Christ and the visible community of the Church. The person who receives the sacramental character receives an ‘ordination’ as a deputation to carry out the priestly acts of Christ in a specifically ecclesial ritual precisely because of this relationship. The metaphors of an indelible ‘mark’ or ‘seal’ may be mistakenly identified as effecting a change in a person apart from the ecclesial and christological relationship when the change effected is precisely that relationship.<sup>179</sup>

With the understanding of sacred power as a sacramental authorization, and with an understanding of sacramental character as constituted precisely in a new relationship of the ordained to Christ and the church, I suggest it is necessary to raise anew the question of what exactly is missing in the ordained ministry of Protestant and Anglican communities. Using the above understanding of the sacrament of order, is it possible to

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<sup>177</sup> Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry,” 38.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>179</sup> Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 74.

suggest that what is missing in these ministries is not *necessarily* an individual minister's sacramental identification with Christ in the celebration of the eucharistic mystery, such that the reality of the eucharistic sacrifice and the real presence of Christ are altogether absent? Rather what is possibly missing is merely the proper relationship of this ministry to the episcopal college, such that the nature of the church as a communion of communions would be imperfectly manifested and realized through the lack of this relationship.<sup>180</sup> This interpretation also fits well with the above understanding of apostolic succession as constituted in and through communion with the episcopal college.

### 2.2.3 *Rethinking Validity and Recognition of Ministries*

In addition to these insights on apostolic succession and the sacrament of order, some theologians have raised anew the meaning of validity and the problem of validating or recognizing the ministry of other Christian communities. Traditionally, judgments in Catholic theology on the validity of sacramental actions have been made according to what may be termed "ritual validation." According to McDonnell, ritual validation is:

the process by which one determines the verity of a sacrament by inquiring whether the person acting was sacramentally ordained or consecrated, whether the

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<sup>180</sup> Susan Wood wrote: "The ordained person officially and sacramentally represents the Church. In particular, a bishop represents his particular church within the communion of churches by his membership in the communion of bishops, the episcopal college.... While it is true that the bishop also represents Christ, the theology of his Christic representation has frequently overshadowed his ecclesial representation with the result that we have forgotten that the sacrament of order signifies something about the Church." Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 68. Gaillardetz also suggested that the various orders (episcopal, presbyteral, diaconate) may share the same sacramental status while locating their uniqueness in their respective ecclesial relationships. He proposed the following: "The episcopal order would be understood as a unique ministerial relation in the church that exercised oversight of a local church (in cooperation with the local presbyterate) but which, unlike the presbyterate, at least in the Roman Catholic Church, also facilitates the communion between the local church and the communion of churches in virtue of his participation in the college of bishops. Within this framework, the diaconate, the presbyterate, and the episcopate would each share full sacramental status without any sense of one being superior to the others or possessing a fullness of the sacrament not accessible to the others." Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 168.

canonically approved form, material and gestures were faithfully adhered to, and whether the intention of the person conferring or confecting the sacrament had the intention of Christ as proposed by the Church.<sup>181</sup>

In 1979 Harry McSorley described a valid sacrament as one in which “the minimum conditions are met on the part of the minister... , the recipient(s) and the rite itself.... If any one of these minimum conditions is lacking, the sacrament is invalid....”<sup>182</sup> A judgment of invalidity has traditionally meant in the post-Tridentine era that the reality of the sacrament is non-existent. What is assumed to be, in fact, does not exist. It is a sham.<sup>183</sup> Thus, an invalid Eucharist does not bring about the eucharistic mystery, nor do invalid orders impress upon the ordinand a real sacramental character.

Today however, several theologians question whether ministry and sacraments can simply be judged as either valid or invalid. Rather, these binary categories need to be replaced with an approach that recognizes degrees of fullness in the ordained ministry. Michael Root argues, “What is needed is...a flexible, scalar category to apply to the episcopacy and ministries of the ecclesial communities, especially to the churches of the Lutheran and Anglican communions that affirm and practice episcopal succession.”<sup>184</sup> Richard Gaillardetz also urges that the “avoidance of binary formulations concerning the recognition of ministries seems crucial to any further progress on these questions.”<sup>185</sup> Francis Sullivan noted that ministries traditionally seen to be invalid nevertheless can be

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<sup>181</sup> McDonnell, “Ways of Validating Ministry,” 217.

<sup>182</sup> McSorley, “The Roman Catholic Doctrine of the Competent Minister of the Eucharist,” 121.

<sup>183</sup> See Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 218.

<sup>184</sup> Michael Root, “Bishops, Ministry, and the Unity of the Church in Ecumenical Dialogue: Deadlock, Breakthrough or Both?” *CTSA Proceedings* 62 (2007): 33.

<sup>185</sup> Gaillardetz, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, 144.

very effective in leading people to salvation despite “whatever deficiency there may be with regard to their orders.”<sup>186</sup>

Ecumenical dialogues have increasingly interpreted the *defectus sacramenti ordinis* in Protestant and Anglican communities as a partial lack rather than a complete absence. Thus the bilateral document of the International Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, “The Ministry in the Church” (1981), stated, “The ecumenical dialogue that has been going on since [Vatican II] has increasingly given rise to the question whether *defectus* refers to a partial lack rather than a complete absence. In considering this problem, the ecumenical experience of the action of the Holy Spirit in the other churches and of the spiritual fruitfulness of their ministries plays an important role.”<sup>187</sup> It is noteworthy for the thesis of this dissertation that ecumenists recognize that the experience of spiritual fruitfulness in Protestant and Anglican communities is a sign of the reality of their ministry. In its 2006 statement, “The Apostolicity of the Church,” the same commission said, “It is Catholic doctrine that in Lutheran churches the sacramental sign of ordination is not fully present because those who ordain do not act in communion with and as a member of the Catholic episcopal college. Therefore the Second Vatican Council speaks of a *defectus ordinis* (UR 22) in these churches.”<sup>188</sup>

Nevertheless, theologians remain divided over whether the statement that ecclesial communities have a *defectus sacramenti ordinis* (UR 22) should be understood

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<sup>186</sup> See Sullivan, “The Impact of *Dominus Iesus* on Ecumenism.”

<sup>187</sup> “The Ministry in the Church,” in *Growth in Agreement*, 271-2.

<sup>188</sup> Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity, *The Apostolicity of the Church: Study Document of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2006). Cited in Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London: Continuum, 2009): 118.

as a complete absence of the sacrament of order or rather a lack of fullness or a defect in the sacrament of order. In his 2010 article, “‘Ecclesial Communities’ and their ‘*Defectus Sacramenti Ordinis*,’” Francis Sullivan argues that the correct interpretation of the phrase in *Unitatis Redintegratio* #22 is that such ecclesial communities have a complete absence of the sacrament of order.<sup>189</sup> John Hotchkin, however, argued in a 2000 address to the Canon Law Society of America that such a translation is much too flat and should be translated as a “defect of the sacrament of orders.”<sup>190</sup> Susan Wood (2003) noted the development in ecumenical understanding warrants a more nuanced translation:

Ecumenical discussions today raise the question whether in light of a more developed understanding of the ministry, sacramental life, and ecclesiology, ‘*defectus*’ should continue to be translated as ‘lack’ rather than as ‘deficiency’ or ‘defect.’ A communion ecclesiology admits of varying degrees of relationship, described as full or imperfect communion, rather than the all-or-nothing juridical judgment of valid or invalid.<sup>191</sup>

Thomas Rausch likewise argues that at issue is not the validity of the sacrament of order, the “*res sacramenti*,” but a defect in regards to the sign of the sacrament.<sup>192</sup>

The traditional notion of validity has also been criticized effectively by the Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, for implying that ministry can be evaluated apart from the community:

‘Validity’ is basically a juridical term, and it implies that the ministry can be isolated from the rest of ecclesiology and be judged in itself. This notion implies, furthermore, that there can be objective criteria, such as ‘faith’ or ‘historical apostolic succession’ etc., that can form the norms for such a judgment. Such an approach would tend to undermine the fact that all these ‘criteria’ originally

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<sup>189</sup> Francis Sullivan, “Ecclesial Communities,” 6-7.

<sup>190</sup> John Hotchkin, “Canon Law and Ecumenism: Giving Shape to the Future,” *Origins* 30, no. 19 (October 19, 2000): 293.

<sup>191</sup> Susan K. Wood, “*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: A Roman Catholic Response,” 397.

<sup>192</sup> Thomas P. Rausch, *Towards A Truly Catholic Church: An Ecclesiology for the Third Millenium* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005): 212.

formed an integral and organic part of the concrete community, especially in its eucharistic form.<sup>193</sup>

Rather than evaluating the validity of ministry in this juridical manner, the theologians considered here suggest that the ecclesial reality of the community is the norm and starting point for validating a community's ministry rather than any isolated objective criteria. Thus, Zizioulas said, "If...we do not isolate the ministry from the reality of the community created by the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit, what 'validates' a certain ministry is to be found not in isolated and objectified 'norms' but in *the community* to which this ministry belongs."<sup>194</sup> McDonnell called this method of validating ministry primarily in reference to the ecclesiality of the community "ecclesial validation." He defined this as "a theological process which proceeds from the nature of the church and its presence in a community of faith to a recognition of true ministry. This process may take various forms, but in all of its manifestations its point of departure is the nature and presence of the Church and its term is true, authentic, valid ministry."<sup>195</sup>

Zizioulas noted that the major implication of this view of validating ministry is that recognition of a Christian ministry consists in an existential recognition of the community:

The first and fundamental consequence of the method of looking at the community first and then at the criteria is that the recognition of ministries becomes in fact a *recognition of communities* in an existential sense. Thus one's primary question in facing another ministry would be a question concerning *the entire structure of the community* to which it belongs. When we say 'structure'

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<sup>193</sup> Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 243.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid. Emphasis original.

<sup>195</sup> McDonnell, "Ways of Validating Ministry," 254. "Valid ministry is rather attached to the meaning and nature of the church. One should not argue that the true church of Christ has one specific form of ministry and none other. It would seem wiser to argue from the church to ministry. That form of ministry is good and acceptable which realizes that which Christ meant his church to be." Ibid., 257-8.

we do not mean a certain institution as such but the way in which a community relates itself to God, to the world and to the other communities....<sup>196</sup>

Validating ministry through an existential examination of how a community relates to God, the world and other communities is something that several notable theologians have advocated. In Sullivan's estimation, "One can hardly recognize the authentic Christian life of another community without forming a positive judgment about the ordained ministry that nurtured and fostered that life."<sup>197</sup> Wood said that recognition of ministries should come through recognition of a community's beliefs and sacramental life.<sup>198</sup> Tillard argued that the validity of a community's ministry should be ascertained only through asking whether one recognizes in the community the essential features of the apostolic community as understood and explained by the great Tradition.<sup>199</sup> Finally, Tavard suggested that "recognizing in another Christian Church the experience of being the Church leads unavoidably to recognizing its ministry as valid and possibly licit."<sup>200</sup>

In summary, a good many theologians have criticized the CDF in its evaluation of the ministry and ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. In judging that these communities are not "churches in the proper sense of the word," the CDF has used overly juridical criteria in isolation from a broader consideration of the ecclesiality of these communities. The theologians cited above advocate that is preferable to judge the validity of Christian ministry according to the ecclesiality of its community, rather than

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<sup>196</sup> Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 244. Emphasis original. Further on he wrote: "Instead of trying to recognize each other's 'orders' as such, the divided communities of our time should rather try to recognize each other as ecclesial communities relating to God and the world through their ministries in the way that is implied in the mystery of Christ and the Spirit." Ibid., 246.

<sup>197</sup> Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 236.

<sup>198</sup> Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders*, 78.

<sup>199</sup> Tillard, "Recognition of Ministries," 32.

<sup>200</sup> Tavard, "The Recognition of Ministry," 34.

make judgments about the ecclesiality of the community based primarily on an examination of its ministry without reference to that community's faith, life and worship.

#### 2.2.4 *Protestant and Anglican Eucharistic Reality*

A final consideration for this chapter, and one that is perhaps most important given the Catholic Church's teaching that the presence of the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery is necessary for a Christian community to be "church," is how post-conciliar Catholic theology has understood the eucharistic reality of Protestant and Anglican communities, especially in light of the ecumenical progress made in this area since the Council. Similar to the issues of apostolicity and recognition of ministries, several Catholic theologians have argued that it is too simplistic to understand the eucharistic mystery as either entirely present or absent in Protestant and Anglican communities. As far back as 1970 Max Thurian remarked that the dialectic of all and nothing has been replaced by Vatican II with a dialectic of all and less.<sup>201</sup> Most recently (2007), Gaillardetz asks, "Must the Eucharist be seen as either present or absent, valid or invalid, without a more complex recognition that acknowledges disputed issues?"<sup>202</sup>

Harry McSorley argued early on (1967) that this "all and less dialectic" was likely operative throughout the Council's deliberations on *Unitatis Redintegratio*. He believed that the Council did not intend to deny that those communities with a *defectus sacramenti ordinis* nevertheless possessed *something* of the reality of the eucharistic mystery.<sup>203</sup> His

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<sup>201</sup> Max Thurian, "L'intercommunion fruit d'une foi commune," in *Vers L'Intercommunion* (Paris, 1970): 45-48. Cited in Maurice Villain, "A Catholic Reply," in *The Plurality of Ministries*, Concilium 74, eds. Hans Küng and Walter Kasper (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972): 110.

<sup>202</sup> Gaillardetz, "The Church of Christ and the Churches," 20.

<sup>203</sup> "In our opinion, this passage of the Decree on Ecumenism [UR #22]...confirms...that the 'Holy Supper' celebrated by the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities in the West is, in some imperfect though



conclusion was based on the following *modi* of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity on article 22: “It cannot be denied that the separated brethren, in the worship of the Holy Supper, truly commemorate the death and resurrection of the Lord.” The Secretariat then added: “The memorial (*Anamnesis*) of the death and resurrection of the Lord is, according to the Council of Trent, the very representation of the eucharistic mystery.”<sup>204</sup>

That Protestant and Anglican communities possess something of the eucharistic mystery is strengthened by the fact that ecumenical dialogue with these communities concluded that many of them share a substantially similar faith with the Catholic Church on the meaning and significance of the Eucharist. According to Sullivan:

Many Catholic ecumenists say that thirty-five years of dialogues have shown that a much higher degree of communion in faith and liturgical practice exists between the Catholic Church and such communities as the Anglican and Lutheran than was known to the bishops of Vatican II. Through these dialogues, it has become evident that when the Anglican and Lutheran communities gather to celebrate the Eucharist their belief about what they are doing and what they are receiving is substantially what Catholics believe. It is also evident that they believe Christ instituted the ministry of word and sacrament and that only those duly ordained are qualified to preside at the Eucharist.<sup>205</sup>

Luis Bermejo argued that such ecumenical consensus is itself reason enough to reconsider the ecclesiality of these communities:

Similarly, the large area of convergence on the Eucharist that has emerged after the Council is in itself a sufficient reason to reconsider the theological presuppositions which lie behind the Council’s refusal to speak openly of Protestant *Churches*. The Eucharist of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, for

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substantial sense, the eucharistic mystery itself and not simply a *votum sacramenti* or a quasi-sacramental manifestation of a desire for the eucharist.” See McSorley, “Protestant Eucharist Reality and Lack of Orders,” 70.

<sup>204</sup> McSorley, “Protestant Eucharist Reality and Lack of Orders,” 71, 74.

<sup>205</sup> Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 235-236.

instance, can no longer be considered as ‘nothing’, or even as falling short of the true and genuine dominical Supper....<sup>206</sup>

Finally, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) also claimed “substantial agreement” between Anglicans and Roman Catholics on the Eucharist and ordained ministry.<sup>207</sup>

Further considerations also support the conclusion that Protestant and Anglican communities possess something of the eucharistic mystery. Many theologians have argued that a traditionally invalid sacramental action need not mean that nothing sacramental has taken place. Thus McSorley said, “When Catholics are forbidden to receive sacraments from any but ‘validly ordained’ ministers...this is not to be understood as an implication that the sacraments conferred by those ministers lack objective sacramental reality.”<sup>208</sup> Likewise Burkhard suggested that to “call a sacrament ‘invalid’ does not mean that nothing has occurred sacramentally, but that the celebration and administration of the sacrament has not fully conformed to the church’s understanding of the sacrament and has not fulfilled all the conditions governing its celebration and administration.”<sup>209</sup> Tavad also stated that “validity or invalidity say nothing about the

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<sup>206</sup> Bermejo, *Towards Christian Reunion*, 304. He goes on to describe the breadth of consensus achieved: “The eucharistic real presence, the sacrificial dimension of the mystery, the Eucharist deeply conceived at once as *anamnesis* and *epiclesis*, the permanent real presence beyond the liturgical celebration, the essentially communitarian character of the eucharistic liturgy and consequent devaluation of a merely private celebration, the unifying and vivifying strength of the sacrament: all this vast area of agreement is a reality today....” Ibid., 304.

<sup>207</sup> Burkhard wrote: “The significance of what ARCIC has achieved needs to be acknowledged. The Commission has claimed that on the issue of what Anglicans and Roman Catholics believe regarding the Eucharist and ministry there is ‘substantial agreement.’ It means that both communions are in agreement on all matters that pertain to the essentials of the apostolic faith regarding these doctrines. There is no fundamental divergence on the substance of what Roman Catholics and Anglicans believe about the Eucharist and ministry.” Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 168.

<sup>208</sup> McSorley, “The Roman Catholic Doctrine of the Competent Minister of the Eucharist,” 136.

<sup>209</sup> Burkhard, *Apostolicity Then and Now*, 221-222.

holiness of ministers or the spiritual efficacy of their services.”<sup>210</sup> These statements about the objective sacramental reality of invalid sacraments are obviously made in reference to the sacrament of the Eucharist.<sup>211</sup>

Gaillardetz has an insight that is also relevant for the question of the eucharistic reality of Protestant and Anglican communities. Writing on the ecclesiological foundations of ministry, he said, “Every authentic ecclesial action exercised within an authentic ecclesial relationship is effective only because it is empowered by the Spirit.”<sup>212</sup> Given that it is *only* through the empowerment of the Spirit that an ecclesial action (such as the celebration of the Eucharist) is effective, it seems reasonable to conclude therefore that the *authenticity* of any ecclesial action may be discerned from the effectiveness or fruitfulness of such an action. Thus, the sacramental reality of Protestant and Anglican eucharistic celebrations should be able to be discerned from the authentic eucharistic faith that is believed and lived in these communities through its continual celebration. Such a conclusion reinforces the notion that substantial ecumenical agreement on the Eucharist should cause the Catholic Church to reexamine the ecclesiality of these communities.

Finally, if there is significant eucharistic reality in Protestant and Anglican communities, even though these communities have a *defectus sacramenti ordinis*, then we may ask in what sense they have failed to preserve the genuine and integral reality of

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<sup>210</sup> Tavad, “The Recognition of Ministry,” 27.

<sup>211</sup> Francis Sullivan, in “‘Ecclesial Communities’ and their ‘Defectus Sacramenti Ordinis,’” *Ecumenical Trends* 39, no. 3 (March 2010): 6-7, appears to disagree with the way in which these theologians speak of the sacramentality of invalid ministry. He argues that Vatican II taught in UR 22 that ordained ministers in “ecclesial communities” do not possess the sacrament of order; it is completely absent rather than present in a defective way. For Sullivan, such an ecclesial ministry may be fruitful in bringing grace and salvation through its ministry of the Word, but cannot be called “sacramental” because it does not bring about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. See Sullivan, “Ecclesial Communities,” 7.

<sup>212</sup> Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Ministry,” 41.

the eucharistic mystery. This question was most directly and effectively addressed by McSorley in 1967:

Holy orders is seen rather in terms of the gifts of grace and of ecclesial authority to serve God's people by leading them in the eucharistic mystery—the sign and cause of unity—in *order* and *unity*. Order and unity are mutually dependent aspects of the Church. When an ordained priest leads the eucharistic worship one of the essential conditions is present for that eucharistic reality to be 'genuine and integral' as a sign of unity of God's people. When the eucharist is led by one who has not received the sacrament of orders something integral to the eucharistic mystery is lacking: namely, the full expression of church unity by a minister standing in an ordered relationship to the bishop, whose episcopacy, as the expression of apostolicity, is 'the canon and touchstone of all...church order.'<sup>213</sup>

Thus what is missing in the eucharistic celebration of a community lacking a validly ordained minister is the full eucharistic expression of the church of Christ as a communion of communions, since in this celebration of the Eucharist such communion is not fully manifest insofar as the minister lacks an ordered relationship to the body of bishops and full communion with the episcopal college. Nevertheless, as with the reality of the ordained ministry, must this deficiency in the eucharistic mystery mean that such celebrations are completely void of sacramental reality?

In the decades since Vatican II it is clear that the official position of the Catholic Church has been refined in the direction of a more explicit and negative judgment of the full ecclesiality of the Protestant and Anglican communities, such that the CDF has stated unequivocally that these communities are not “churches” in the theological sense. However, as this chapter has attempted to show, this judgment depends fundamentally on the belief that the ordained ministry in these communities is invalid with the consequence that these communities lack the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery.

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<sup>213</sup> McSorley, “Protestant Eucharist Reality and Lack of Orders,” 74.

After presenting the Catholic Church's understanding of the eucharistic mystery, the sacrament of order, and apostolic succession, noting the implications of this understanding for the Catholic Church's judgment on the sacramental ministry of the Protestant and Anglican communities, the second part of this chapter described the ways in which several theologians have critiqued the official teaching of the Catholic Church on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. Throughout this chapter I have noted several times that the concept of fruitfulness in ministry and ecclesial life is considered by many theologians and ecumenists to be an important aspect of a Christian community's ecclesial reality. It seems clear that the result of much theological and ecumenical scholarship in the decades since the Council suggests that a more positive recognition of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities is now warranted. However, in order to recognize these communities as "churches" in the theological sense, this dissertation will still need to address whether a standard for "church" such as "ecclesial fruitfulness" can adequately address the difficulties present in the fact that the Catholic Church has judged that many of these communities have failed to preserve the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery on account of a *defectus ordinis*. In the next two chapters I will consider how Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper have addressed and answered these questions.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE NATURE OF ECCLESIALITY ACCORDING TO JOSEPH RATZINGER

## 1. *Introduction and Outline of Methodology*

Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, was born on April 16, 1927 in the Bavarian village of Marktl am Inn near the border with Austria.<sup>1</sup> He was ordained to the priesthood with his brother Georg in Freising in 1951. One year later he completed his doctorate working under the direction of Gottlieb Söhngen, a professor of fundamental theology at Munich. His doctoral dissertation was on the ecclesiology of St. Augustine and was entitled *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche*. Ratzinger, at Söhngen's suggestion, did his *Habilitationsschrift* (a second dissertation in Germany required for a chair in theology) on the salvation history of St. Bonaventure. In 1959 Ratzinger was made chair in fundamental theology at the University of Bonn. There he met Cardinal Joseph Frings, the archbishop of Cologne, who later would take Ratzinger to the Second Vatican Council as his *peritus* or theological consultant. In 1963 Ratzinger moved to the University at Münster where he taught dogmatic theology. In 1966 he accepted a position in the Catholic theological faculty at Tübingen, teaching there for three more years before moving to the University of Regensburg in 1969.<sup>2</sup> In 1977 Ratzinger was ordained as archbishop of Munich and Freising at just forty-nine years of age. Pope Paul VI made him a cardinal in June of the same year and just four years later Pope John Paul II appointed him as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). Ratzinger served as prefect of the CDF for twenty-four years until April 19,

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<sup>1</sup> While there are many fine biographies of the life and career of Joseph Ratzinger, I have chosen to briefly summarize his career using the work of Thomas P. Rausch, *Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to His Theological Vision* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> See Lieven Boeve, "Joseph Ratzinger—His Life, Thought and Work," in *The Ratzinger Reader: Mapping a Theological Journey*, eds. Gerald Mannion and Lieven Boeve (New York: Continuum, 2010): 2-3.

2005, when he was elected to succeed Pope John Paul II, upon which he chose the name Benedict XVI.

The majority of Ratzinger's theological work has been in the area of ecclesiology; nevertheless, he does not view the subject of the church as the ultimate end of his theological endeavors. In an interview during the summer of 1996, when asked what is unique to his theology, he responded:

I began with the theme of the Church, and it is present in everything. Only, in dealing with the Church it was important to me, and it has become increasingly important, that the Church not be an end in herself but exist so that God may be seen. In that respect I would say that I study the theme of the Church with the intention of opening a vista onto God. And in this sense God is the real central theme of my endeavors.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear, therefore, that what Ratzinger says about the church, and by extension his understanding of the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities, is necessarily connected to the broader question of God and God's purposes in this world. Ratzinger hinted at this connection between the church, God, and God's relationship to humanity in his earlier 1984 interview with Vittorio Messori (published as *The Ratzinger Report*). In a question about the liturgy, Ratzinger responded, "Behind the various ways of understanding liturgy there are, as almost always, *different ways of understanding the Church and consequently God and man's relation to him.*"<sup>4</sup> For Ratzinger, the liturgy is an expression of a community's understanding of church, while the different

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<sup>3</sup> Joseph Ratzinger and Peter Sewald, *Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997):65-6. Originally published as *Salz der Erde: Christentum und katholische Kirche an der Jahrtausendwende* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt GmbH, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*, trans. Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985): 119-20. Emphasis mine. Originally published as *Zur Lage des Glaubens: ein Gespräch mit Vittorio Messori* (München: Neue Stadt, 1985).



understandings of church prevalent in Christianity today are a reflection of differing understandings of “God and man’s relation to him.” The essence, therefore, of ecclesiality and “church” is intimately and systematically connected in Ratzinger’s thought with many areas of his theology in addition to ecclesiology, particularly his theology of the Trinity, anthropology, christology and eucharistic theology. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to treat all these areas in Ratzinger’s thought. Nevertheless, there is a need to examine how these areas of Ratzinger’s theology inform and shape his ecclesiology and most importantly, his understanding of the Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality.

This chapter will first describe Ratzinger’s thought on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities as it has developed over the course of his career. I shall then examine the theology and ecclesiology underlying his views in order to gain a deeper understanding of his position on the ecclesial reality of Protestant and Anglican communities.<sup>5</sup> The chapter concludes with an examination of the following important issues: 1) the criteria Ratzinger uses to evaluate which Christian communities are “churches” (here I intend to show that Ratzinger emphasizes that a “church” has two main characteristics, namely a “sacramental” or apostolic dimension and a “unitive” or catholic dimension); 2) the consistency of the application of these criteria to non-Catholic communities (here I argue that some of his ecclesiological claims make it hard to recognize any Christian community outside of the Catholic Church as a genuine

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<sup>5</sup> My methodological choice in presenting Ratzinger’s explicit views on the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities is aimed at allowing the reader to see upfront his views on these communities and to have that in mind as I explore the theology and ecclesiology underlying these views.

“church”); 3) to what extent has Ratzinger reversed his earlier judgment concerning Protestant and Anglican communities;<sup>6</sup> and 4) how he justifies his later reasoning for withholding the designation of “church” from these communities. I shall argue that his present position does not sufficiently address his earlier and original arguments for why he formerly recognized them as “churches.” In treating these issues I shall highlight aspects of Ratzinger’s theology that could contribute to my own argument concerning the development of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.” However, a definitive assessment will not be made until Chapter Five where I shall synthesize these contributions in a systematic way.

An important consideration about Ratzinger’s theology that merits mention here is whether there is any continuity in thought between his views as a university professor, his views as Prefect of the CDF and his views as Pope Benedict XVI. This question was posed to Ratzinger himself, when he was still prefect for the CDF, in a letter from Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland. Ratzinger replied that there was nothing he would say as prefect for which he cannot be held personally responsible, although the offices of prefect and that of professor are different and therefore have different tasks.<sup>7</sup> Thus I would maintain that it is fair to regard statements of the CDF published under his signature as prefect as reflective of the views of Joseph Ratzinger the university professor, even though the statements of the CDF may not reflect the deepest concerns of

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<sup>6</sup> As will be shown below, Ratzinger at first believed Vatican II had taught that Protestant and Anglican communities were indeed “churches” in the theological sense.

<sup>7</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005): 229-31. Originally published as *Weg Gemeinschaft des Glaubens: Kirche als Communio* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich Verlag GmbH, 2002).

Ratzinger as an individual. I also assume that this would hold true for Ratzinger the university professor and Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI. Because the statements of the CDF released when Ratzinger was prefect have already been discussed in Chapter Two, here I shall concentrate more on his views as professor and theologian and what he has written on this topic as Pope Benedict XVI.

## 2. *Joseph Ratzinger on the Ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican Communities*

Before exploring the broader ecclesiology of Joseph Ratzinger, I shall first attempt to describe how he has understood the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities over the course of his career as professor, prefect and pope. Early on he made some explicit statements which claimed that the Second Vatican Council officially recognized Protestant communities as “churches.” Later, however, he made statements to the contrary without ever explaining this apparent change of judgment. Nevertheless, although the later Ratzinger makes various statements that appear to deny that Protestant and Anglican communities are “churches” in the theological sense of the word, he does occasionally speak rather positively about the saving presence of Christ in the Protestant and Anglican Eucharist.

### 2.1 *Early Positive Assessment of Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality*

At the beginning of his theological career, Joseph Ratzinger believed that the Second Vatican Council had in its official language finally recognized Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches.” Two works in particular provide the clearest examples of this early viewpoint: *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* (1966) and *Das*

*Neue Volk Gottes* (1969).<sup>8</sup> In *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* Ratzinger argued that the Council extended the title of “church” to non-Catholic Christian communities in order to properly take account of the historical situation in which there are Christian communities outside the Catholic Church that have a self-awareness of being the church:

In view of the historical Christian situation, the Council tried to see the plurality of ‘Churches’ outside the unity of the one Church. *It conceded to non-Catholic Christian communities the honorable name of ‘Church.’ Though they are not ‘the Church,’ they are really ‘Churches.’* Such a formula should go a long way in meeting the self-awareness of these [non-Catholic] communities.<sup>9</sup>

Commenting on the 1963 revised schema on the church, *De Ecclesia*, Ratzinger also argued that the phrase “churches and ecclesial communities” was added in order to address a major misgiving of Protestant observers at the Council:

The text observed that non-Catholic Christians recognized other sacraments besides baptism, and that they received them ‘*in their own Churches and ecclesial communities.*’ Thus allowance was made for a major misgiving on the part of Protestant observers who saw their Churches as bypassed in the text or broken down into their individual components. They had therefore felt misunderstood, indeed snubbed. The new text now says unmistakably and clearly, although in passing, that these Christians exist not merely as individuals but in Christian communities which are given positive Christian status and ecclesial character.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* (New York: Paulist Press, 1966). Originally published as four separate volumes: *Die erste Sitzungsperiode des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils: Ein Rückblick* (Cologne: Bachem, 1963); *Das Konzil auf dem Weg: Rückblick auf die zweite Sitzungsperiode des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils* (Cologne: Bachem, 1964); *Ergebnisse und Problem der dritten Konzilsperiode* (Cologne: Bachem, 1965); and *Des letzte Sitzungsperiode des Konzils* (Cologne: Bachem, 1965). This book was reprinted by Paulist Press with a new introduction by Thomas P. Rausch in 2009. See also Joseph Ratzinger, *Das Neue Volk Gottes: Entwurf zur Ekklesiologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1969). I will cite from the English translation of many of Ratzinger’s works but will reference the original German publication date in the text when applicable.

<sup>9</sup> *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, 74. Emphasis mine.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 67. Emphasis mine.

Later in the same work he stated even more unequivocally, “The Roman Catholic Church made an important new doctrinal step in officially describing the Eastern Churches *and the ecclesiastical communities of the Reformation as ‘churches.’*”<sup>11</sup>

At this time Ratzinger explained that the term “ecclesial communities” was added in order to account for the fact that although most Protestant communities understood themselves as “churches,” some did not:

In many cases the confessions are vitally aware of themselves as Churches.... This however is not always the case. Here was one of the difficulties the Council had to face.... In line with Cardinal König’s suggestion, the term ‘ecclesial communities’ was introduced in the final text along with the term ‘Churches,’ thus leaving the necessary room for special structures and different points of view.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, given Ratzinger’s explanation for the addition of the term “ecclesial communities,” there is no indication that he believed at this time that the Council intended to indicate that Protestant communities were not “churches” in the theological sense of the word because of a *defectus ordinis*.

In his book *Das Neue Volk Gottes* (1969), Ratzinger continued to hold that at Vatican II the Catholic Church had finally recognized Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches.” He wrote, “Who would have ventured to suppose even ten years ago that the official language of the Church would consciously and deliberately begin to designate as Churches not only the Churches of the East, *but also those [ecclesial] communities that resulted from the Reformation?*”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 75. Emphasis mine.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. Emphasis mine.

<sup>13</sup> See *Das Neue Volk Gottes*, 319: “Wer hätte noch vor zehn Jahren anzunehmen gewagt, daß die amtliche Sprache der Kirche beginnen würde, mit vollen Bewußtsein nicht nur die Kirchen Ostens, sondern auch Gemeinschaften, die aus der Reformation hervorgekommen sind, als Kirchen zu bezeichnen?” Translation

What in Ratzinger's early opinion justified the rationale for the Second Vatican Council extending the designation of "church" to Protestant and Anglican communities was the Council's recognition that the Catholic Church did not create the proper and legitimate space within the one church for the existence of a proper plurality of local churches: "Although the Catholic Church considers itself as *the* Church of Christ, it nonetheless recognizes its historic deficiency. It recognizes the fact that the plurality of 'Churches,' which should exist within it, exists today outside it, and perhaps could only exist outside."<sup>14</sup> For this reason the term "church" as applied to these communities "implies the Catholic Church's admission that it did not leave proper room for this multiplicity in its oneness."<sup>15</sup> The reason Ratzinger gave for the lack of this multiplicity in oneness was the church of Rome's push toward centralization and uniformity. Furthermore, this centralization contributed to the separation among Christians and thereby forced the legitimate plurality of churches to develop outside the Catholic Church:

The plurality of Churches, which should have had a legitimate existence within the Church, had receded increasingly into the background. This explains why this plurality, for which there was no room *within* the Church, was developed *outside* of it in the form of autonomous separate Churches; a real multiplicity of Churches must be made alive again within the framework of Catholic unity.<sup>16</sup>

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is from Maximilian Heinrich Heim, *Joseph Ratzinger: Life in the Church and Living Theology*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997): 309.

<sup>14</sup> *Theological Highlights*, 74. Emphasis original.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* Emphasis original.

<sup>16</sup> *Theological Highlights*, 72. Emphasis original. Ratzinger wrote: "This plurality of Churches [as found in the New Testament] has in fact increasingly receded in favor of a centralized system; in this process the local Church of Rome has absorbed all the other local Churches. In this way unity was curtailed in favor of uniformity. This state of affairs, which the Council has attempted to correct, was a cause for the separation among the Churches," *ibid.*

## 2.2 Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality in Ratzinger's Ecumenical Vision

Ratzinger has remained consistent in his desire to see Protestant and Anglican communities grow into the unity of the one church rather than be absorbed or dissolved.

In *Theological Highlights* he wrote:

The Catholic has to recognize that his own Church is not yet prepared to accept the phenomenon of multiplicity in unity; he must orient himself toward this reality; Meantime the Catholic Church has no right to *absorb* the other Churches. The Church has not yet prepared for them a place of their own, but this they are legitimately entitled to.<sup>17</sup>

In lieu of the idea of the conversion of Protestant and Anglican communities, Ratzinger's vision for unity is for "a basic unity—of Churches that remain Churches, yet become *one* Church."<sup>18</sup>

An example of Ratzinger's ecumenical vision is given by Harding Meyer, who notes that Ratzinger was the first important Catholic theologian to support an idea, taken up in numerous Catholic/Protestant conversations between 1976 and 1980, that a version of the Augsburg Confession be recognized by the Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup> A common recognition, Ratzinger argued, "would demonstrate the Catholic does not insist on the dissolution of the Protestant confessions and churches but rather hopes that they will be

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<sup>17</sup> *Theological Highlights*, 73. Emphasis original. See also Joseph Ratzinger, "The Future of Ecumenism," *Theology Digest* 25 (1977): 204, where Ratzinger wrote: "Catholics do not advocate the dissolution of the Confessions and the decomposition of Evangelical Churches; quite the contrary, they place their hope in this reinforcement of the faith and ecclesial reality." Extract from "Prognosen für die Zukunft des Ökumenismus," *Bausteine für die Einheit der Christen* 17, no. 65 (1977): 6-14.

<sup>18</sup> *Theological Highlights*, 73. Emphasis original. Similarly: "[The Catholic] can hope that the hour will come when 'the Churches' that exist outside 'the Church' will enter into its unity. But they must remain in existence as Churches, with only those modifications which such a unity necessarily requires." Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Harding Meyer, "Pope Benedict XVI as Theologian, Philosopher of Religion, and Ecumenist," in *The Pontificate of Benedict XVI: Its Premises and Promises*, ed. William G. Rusch (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009): 45.

strengthened in their confessions and ecclesial reality.”<sup>20</sup> Recognition of the Augsburg Confession by the Catholic Church would allow the Catholic Church to admit the catholicity of the Augsburg Confession churches:

Such a recognition would imply that the Catholic Church acknowledges a particular form of realizing the common faith with its own independence. It would mean on the Reformed side, that this text, which is open to several interpretations, would be construed in harmony with the doctrine of the ancient church and its basic ecclesiastical form. The problem would be solved by accepting a *Confessio Augustana* understood in a Catholic sense, and the ancient heritage would be received and lived in the light of this hermeneutic.<sup>21</sup>

What is significant in Ratzinger’s ecumenical vision is the recognition that even in the present situation Protestant and Anglican communities remain “churches” even though they need to grow into the unity of the one church through mutual recognition and dialogue.

### 2.3 *The Fundamentally Different Protestant Conception of “Church”*

Ratzinger has made clear throughout his career that he views the sixteenth-century Reformation as creating a new form of Christian community that substantially differs from the Catholic/Orthodox understanding. In *Theological Highlights* (1966), he wrote, “However, the Protestant break with Rome was of a different nature. It fundamentally challenged the concept of Church and created a new form of the community: the confession or denomination. ‘Word’ is now more important than sacrament and hierarchy.”<sup>22</sup> According to Ratzinger, the Protestant position is that only

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<sup>20</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987): 202. Originally published as *Theologische Prinzipienlehre: Bausteine zur Fundamentaltheologie* (München: E. Wewel, 1982).

<sup>21</sup> “The Future of Ecumenism,” 204.

<sup>22</sup> *Theological Highlights*, 75. It should be noted that even though he here argues that the Protestant break with Rome created a fundamentally new form of community, nevertheless, as I have shown above, on the



the congregation is truly the church and not any supra-local institution or structure. Thus, in *Principles of Catholic Theology* (1982), he said, “The notion that it is actually only the community that is ‘Church’ in the true sense and that the other—the universal—Church is just an instrument or organization with no spiritual status—this notion is accepted as self-evident today by the average [Protestant] Christian....”<sup>23</sup> Ratzinger expressed a similar understanding of the Protestant understanding of “church” nine years later in *Called to Communion* (1991):

The point on which the Reformed position is built is the Word: the Word of God gathers men and creates ‘community.’ The proclamation of the Gospel produces—so they say—congregation, and this congregation is the ‘Church.’ In other words, the Church as institution has in this view no properly theological status; only the community has theological significance, because what matters is the Word alone.<sup>24</sup>

Ratzinger thus argued that Protestants, in contrast to Catholics and the Orthodox, conceive of the church mainly in congregational terms, and view the individual congregation as having the ability to constitute itself as “church.”<sup>25</sup>

For Ratzinger, a congregational understanding of the church means that Protestant communities are not really “churches” in the same way that the Catholic Church understands herself to be “church.” In a September 22, 2000 interview, shortly after the publication of *Dominus Iesus*, Ratzinger reasserted his conviction about *Dominus Iesus*

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same page of *Theological Highlights* he can still write that Vatican II had officially recognized the ecclesiastical communities of the Reformation as “churches.” It appears for the early Ratzinger that Protestant communities could still be designated as “churches” even though they held a significantly different understanding of “church.”

<sup>23</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 291-92.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996): 80-81. Originally published as *Zur Gemeinschaft gerufen: Kirche heute verstehen* (Freiburg: Herder, 1991).

<sup>25</sup> See *Called to Communion*, 81-82.

that “the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery are not Churches in the proper sense....”<sup>26</sup> This conviction echoed his earlier observation that Protestant communities themselves do not wish to be “church” in the same way that the Catholic Church desires to be “church”:

The claim of our Lutheran brethren appears to me to be frankly absurd. That is, that we should consider structures which came about due to historical chance as Churches in the same way we believe to be ‘the Church’ the Catholic Church, founded upon the succession of the Apostles in the Episcopacy. It would be more correct for our Protestant friends to tell us that for them a Church signifies something different, a more dynamic reality and not so institutional, not even with regard to apostolic succession. Then the question would not be whether existing Churches are all Churches in the same manner, which is obviously not true, but in what consists or does not consist the Church. *In this sense, we do not offend anyone by saying that the Protestant communities are not really Churches in the sense in which the Catholic Church wishes to be the Church. They themselves do not wish to be the Church in that way.*<sup>27</sup>

Unlike the earlier Ratzinger who apparently held that Vatican II officially recognized Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches” despite their differing conception of what constitutes “church,” it is clear from this 2001 interview, and even as early as 1991, that Ratzinger had reversed course on what Vatican II intended to communicate about Protestant ecclesiality: “The Second Vatican Council sought to receive this divergent way of determining the place of the Church, affirming that Protestant Churches are not Churches in the same way the Catholic Church believes herself to be, yet that in these ‘there exist elements of salvation and truth.’”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Dominus Iesus* #17.

<sup>27</sup> Christian Geyer, “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” *Inside the Vatican* (January 2001): 113.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

It seems that the later Ratzinger rethought his conception of “church” such that it now provides sufficient grounds for withholding this designation from Protestant communities who hold a fundamentally different understanding of what constitutes a “church.” Thus, later in the same interview he contrasted the ecclesiality of the separated eastern churches with those of the Protestant Reform:

According to Catholic doctrine...the local Churches of the Eastern Church separated from Rome are authentic local Churches; the communities which resulted from the Protestant Reform were created in a different manner, as I have just said. For these, the Church exists in the moment in which the event takes place.<sup>29</sup>

While Ratzinger regards the local churches of the East as “authentic local churches,” he does not designate the Protestant communities as authentic “churches” because of a fundamentally different conception of “church.”

#### 2.4 “*Subsistit*” and its Implications for Non-Catholic Ecclesiality

Ratzinger has been heavily involved in the debate over the proper interpretation of the phrase “*subsistit in Ecclesia catholica*” in *Lumen Gentium* #8. He has consistently argued that the Latin word *subsistit* should be interpreted as meaning that the church of Christ exists as a concrete agent in the Catholic Church:

The term *subsistit* derives from classical philosophy, as it was further developed in Scholasticism.... *Subsistere* is a special variant of *esse*. It is ‘being’ in the form of an independent agent.... The Council is trying to tell us that the Church of Jesus Christ may be encountered in this world as a concrete agent in the Catholic Church. That can happen only once, and the view that *subsistit* should be multiplied fails to do justice to the particular point intended.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>30</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 147. See also Geyer, “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” 117: “By the grace of God, the subject ‘Church’ truly exists and subsists in the Catholic Church; Christ’s promise is the guarantee that this subject will never be destroyed.”

Thus, for Ratzinger there is only one “subsistence” of the church of Christ that cannot be multiplied and this subsistence is in the Catholic Church.<sup>31</sup>

The fact that there is only one “subsistence” of the church of Christ in the Catholic Church does not mean, however, that there is an ecclesial void outside the Catholic Church. Ratzinger has emphasized this point numerous times. In *Principles of Catholic Theology*, for example, he wrote, “The Church is there present where the successors of the Apostle Peter and of the other apostles visibly incorporate her continuity with her source; but this full concreteness of the Church does not mean that every other Church can be only a non-Church.”<sup>32</sup> Rather the word *subsistit* is intended to convey the fact that there is ecclesial reality outside the Catholic Church. And during his interview on *Dominus Iesus*, Ratzinger said, “With the word *subsistit* it was also intended to mean that, although the Lord maintains his promise, there exists another ecclesial reality outside the Catholic community, and it is that very contradiction which is our greatest incitement to pursue unity.”<sup>33</sup>

Though Ratzinger argues that the ecclesial reality outside the Catholic Church suffers from various types of defects, the existence of ecclesiality outside the Catholic Church is also a wound for the Catholic Church. Thus, in commenting on the CDF document *Communio notio* (1992), he wrote:

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<sup>31</sup> In Chapter Two I pointed out that scholars such as Sullivan question whether such a scholastic interpretation is warranted, arguing that while the German translation of *Lumen Gentium* #8 lends itself to a scholastic interpretation, the translation of the Latin does not require it. See note 4 on page 91 above.

<sup>32</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 230-1.

<sup>33</sup> Geyer, “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” 114. In the *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* Ratzinger says, “The distinction between *subsistit* and *est* does, however, imply the drama of the schism of the Church: although the Church is only one, and does really exist, there is being that is derived from the being of the Church, an ecclesiastical entity, even outside the one Church,” 148.

The text says explicitly that even the Roman Catholic Church is also wounded by this separation, because she cannot fully represent unity in history. If we look at the reality of the Church and the Churches, who could doubt that any of them—in varying ways—are wounded?<sup>34</sup>

Again, in his 2001 interview on *Dominus Iesus*, Ratzinger said the “subject” of the church of Christ in the Catholic Church is wounded by the very fact that other ecclesial entities exist and operate outside her.<sup>35</sup> And in 2005 he wrote, “[In *Dominus Iesus*] there is mention of wounds on both sides [i.e. both Catholic and non-Catholic], which may be of different kinds but are still quite real on both sides.”<sup>36</sup> Although the *one* church of Christ has its concrete subsistence uniquely in the Catholic Church, it too is wounded insofar as its concrete unity is not fully manifested in the historical situation of divided Christianity due to the existence of various real (though wounded) ecclesial entities operating outside her visible communion.

## 2.5 *Evaluation of Protestant Ministry and Eucharistic Reality*

Ratzinger has expressed on several occasions a remarkably positive interpretation of Protestant and Anglican ministry and eucharistic reality. In *Principles of Catholic Theology* he displayed a very optimistic outlook on the persistent differences that remain with Protestants concerning the Eucharist and the ministerial priesthood. Commenting on the 1973 CDF document *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, he argued:

Anyone who interprets the text narrowly could conclude from it that the priesthood and, consequently, the Eucharist are being denied to the Protestant churches. But the question of the priesthood is contested on both sides, since Protestant Christianity is, for the most part, inclined to fear, in the Catholic version thereof, a lapse from the gospel.... There is a lack of unity here that does

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<sup>34</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 235-6.

<sup>35</sup> Geyer, “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” 117.

<sup>36</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 251.

not have to be seen as irremediable and that shows signs of hope again and again in individual areas of misunderstanding.<sup>37</sup>

Furthermore, Ratzinger believed that “Catholic teaching here recalled to memory does not in any way deny that Protestant Christians who believe in the presence of the Lord also share in that presence.”<sup>38</sup> Here it would seem that Ratzinger is essentially affirming that Catholic teaching at least up to 1973 had not denied that that Protestant (and presumably Anglican) communities have something of the reality of the eucharistic mystery.

Another example of Ratzinger’s positive appreciation of the Protestant Eucharist is found in his 1992 exchange of letters with Provincial Bishop Johannes Hanselmann of the Lutheran- Evangelical Church in Bavaria. In reply to some of Bishop Hanselmann’s concerns about the recently published CDF document *Communio in notio*, Ratzinger wrote:

One of the most important results of ecumenical conversations is the realization that the questions of the Eucharist cannot be restricted to the problem of ‘validity.’ Even a theology along the lines of the concept of succession, as is in force in the Catholic and Orthodox Church, should in no way deny the saving presence of the Lord in the Evangelical Lord’s Supper.<sup>39</sup>

Here it is very noteworthy that Ratzinger affirms the *saving presence* of the Lord in the Evangelical Lord’s Supper *despite* what he would surely consider to be “defects” in the ordained ministry of the Lutheran-Evangelical Church. In the same correspondence, he again acknowledges that the “burdensome question of succession does not detract from the spiritual dignity of Evangelical Christianity, or from the saving power of the Lord at

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<sup>37</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 236.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 248.

work within it....”<sup>40</sup> The suggestion that questions regarding ministerial validity and apostolic succession in Protestant and Anglican communities should not detract from the spiritual dignity of these communities or from the saving presence and power of Christ in their Eucharist further implies that for Ratzinger there must be other ways of evaluating the reality of Protestant and Anglican Eucharist and ministry.

Despite these positive statements, it is still apparent that Ratzinger does not believe that Protestant and Anglican communities have preserved the authentic and integral nature of the eucharistic mystery. As Pope Benedict XVI, in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007), he wrote:

An emphasis on this eucharistic basis of ecclesial communion can also contribute greatly to the ecumenical dialogue with the Churches and Ecclesial Communities which are not in full communion with the See of Peter. The Eucharist objectively creates a powerful bond of unity between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches, which have preserved the authentic and integral nature of the eucharistic mystery. At the same time, emphasis on the ecclesial character of the Eucharist can become an important element of the dialogue with the Communities of the Reformed tradition.<sup>41</sup>

Thus a powerful bond exists between the Orthodox churches and the Catholic churches that only affords a source of dialog with Protestant and Anglican communities. This bond consists in the fact that the former have preserved the authentic and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery while the latter apparently have not.

After this brief examination of Ratzinger’s thought on the nature of Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality, it remains unclear exactly in what sense Ratzinger understands these communities to be “churches” and to what degree these communities have

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>41</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007), #15.

preserved the authentic and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery. The early Ratzinger seemed to think that Protestant communities are “churches” despite their fundamentally different understanding of what constitutes a “church.” The later Ratzinger, on the other hand, appears to argue that this fundamentally different ecclesiological self-understanding is the basis for not calling them “churches” in the theological sense. Concerning Protestant and Anglican ministry and eucharistic reality, Ratzinger throughout his career has made some very positive statements about the spiritual dignity of the eucharistic celebrations in these communities, granting that they really manifest the saving presence and power of the Lord despite questions of ministerial validity and apostolic succession. Nevertheless, in his most recent statements as pope, it is also clear that he still believes these communities have not preserved the authentic and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery as have the non-Catholic churches of the East. In the remainder of this chapter I shall attempt to elucidate more clearly what Ratzinger believes about the nature of the church and what this means for his understanding of Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality.

### 3. *The Theological Foundation for Ratzinger’s Understanding of “Church”*

In order to fully grasp Ratzinger’s understanding of “church,” it is helpful to understand what he believes about God, humankind, and God’s relation to humankind. As he himself acknowledged, one’s understanding of “church” reflects and is consequently shaped by these foundational theological subjects. In this section I shall briefly outline Ratzinger’s theology of the Trinity, his theological anthropology, and his



understanding of the Paschal Mystery as the fulfillment of God's purpose for humankind in order to give a broader theological foundation for his understanding of "church."

### 3.1 *Trinitarian Theology: One God in the Fruitfulness that is Love*

"Fruitfulness" is a concept that occurs often in Ratzinger's theology of the Trinity. In Ratzinger's thought, the essence of God is God's relationality. In *Introduction to Christianity* (1968), he wrote, "The profession of faith in God as a person necessarily includes the acknowledgment of God as relatedness, as communicability, as *fruitfulness*."<sup>42</sup> Eight years later, in *The God of Jesus Christ* (1976), Ratzinger described the oneness of the Father and Son as "fruitfulness":

The Father and the Son are a single movement of the pure gift of one to the other; they are a pure offering. In this movement they are fruitful, and their fruitfulness is their unity and their total communion even though their personalities are still not taken from them and they are not dissolved into one another.<sup>43</sup>

Ratzinger further developed the theme of the fruitfulness of God by relating it to the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit; for him the fruitfulness of God, which is the unity of God, *is* the Holy Spirit:

The Father and Son do not become one by dissolving into one another. They stay face to face, for love is established as a face-to-face meeting, which is not suppressed. If then each of the Persons stays himself, and if they do not mutually eliminate each other, the unity cannot consist of each Person by himself but in the fruitfulness in which each of them offers himself and is himself. They are one

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<sup>42</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. R. Foster and Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004): 179-80. Emphasis mine. Originally published as *Einführung in das Christentum: Vorlesungen über das apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis* (München: Köse, 1968).

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ: Mediations on God in the Trinity*, trans. Robert J. Cunningham (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979): 103-4. Originally published as *Der Gott Jesu Christi: Betrachtungen über den Dreieinigen Gott* (München: Kösel, 1976). In a 1965 article he wrote: "To describe the unity of the divine persons, patristic theology has coined the concept of *perichoresis* according to which this unity is an eternal dynamic interchange and interpenetration of Spirit and Spirit, of love and love." See Joseph Ratzinger, "The Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality," in *The Church and Mankind*, Concilium 1, eds. Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx, (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965): 54. Published simultaneously with the German.

inasmuch as their love is fruitful and goes beyond them. In the Third Person the Father and the Son give themselves to each other, and in this gift they bring it about that each of them is himself and that they are also one.<sup>44</sup>

Here Ratzinger follows St. Augustine who taught that the Holy Spirit embodies what is in common to the Father and the Son:

The Third divine Person is certainly not—in contradistinction to the words Father and Son—an expression of some specific feature. On the contrary, it means what is common to God. Now this is just where what is ‘proper’ to the Third Person appears. This person is what is in common; he is the unity of the Father and the Son; he is the personification of the unity of God. The Father and the Son are one to the extent that they go beyond themselves; and they are one in the Third Person, in the fruitfulness of their gift.<sup>45</sup>

Thus the Holy Spirit is not a reality that one can discuss apart from the triune God. To speak of the Holy Spirit is to speak of the relationality and fruitfulness of God in the unity of love:

Now the Holy Spirit does not represent a third reality somewhere next to or between the other two. He leads us to the unity of God. Looking to him means overcoming distinction and recognizing the ring of eternal love that is the highest unity. He who wants to speak of the Spirit must speak of the Trinity of God.<sup>46</sup>

In summary, in Ratzinger’s Trinitarian theology “the fruitfulness of God” is the single movement of love between Father and Son, of pure gift and offering that goes beyond each other and is their unity. The person of the Holy Spirit *is* the fruitfulness of Father and Son’s mutual gift of love and *is* therefore the unity of God.

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<sup>44</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 28.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-2. See also *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 41.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Images of Hope: Meditations on Major Feasts*, trans. John Rock and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006): 65. Originally published as *Bilder der Hoffnung: Wanderungen im Kirchenjahr* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1997). All citations are from the chapter “The Holy Spirit and the Church,” originally published as Joseph Ratzinger, “Der Heilige Geist und die Kirche,” in A. Coreth and I. Fux, eds., *Servitium pietatis: Festschrift für Kardinal Groer zum 70. Geburtstag* (Salterrae Maria Roggendorf, 1989): 91-97.

### 3.2 *Anthropology: Persons Created for Openness and Unity in Love*

As God is fruitful in the unity of a single movement of pure gift and offering between Father and Son that reaches beyond each other, so also God is not a God enclosed within God's own self. God is also open to a relationship with creation and with humankind: "God is a God with us and not just a God in himself and for himself."<sup>47</sup> Since humanity is created in the image of God, humankind is rooted in and mirrors the inner nature of the Trinity. Thus, the human person is, in his or her essential constitution, a relational being.<sup>48</sup>

If persons are created to exist in relationships of openness and love with other persons, it is *through* our mutual movement into the love of the triune God:

The ultimate goal for us all is becoming happy. Yet happiness exists only in company with each other, and we can keep company only in the infinity of love. There is happiness only in the removal of the barriers of the self in moving into divinity, in becoming divine.<sup>49</sup>

God's purpose for us is therefore a unity that mirrors the Trinity. Only through a higher unity with God will persons find unity among themselves:

And from the Trinity, the Spirit tells us what God's idea for us was: unity according to the image of God. He also tells us, however, that we men among ourselves can become one only when we find ourselves in a higher unity, as it were, in a third party. Only when we are one with God can we be united among ourselves. The way to the other leads over God. Without this medium of unity,

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<sup>47</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003): 13. Originally published as *Gott ist uns nah: Eucharistie, Mitte des Lebens* (Augsburg: Sankt Ulrich, 2001). Cited text originally published as Joseph Ratzinger, "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine," *Klerusblatt* 75 (1995): 107-10.

<sup>48</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism and Politics: New Essays in Ecclesiology*, trans. Michael J. Miller et al (New York: Crossroad, 1988): 31. Originally published as *Kirche, Ökumene und Politik: neue Versuche zur Ekklesiologie* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1987).

<sup>49</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 166.

we would remain eternally separated from one another by abysses that no good will can bridge.<sup>50</sup>

According to this way of thinking, humankind is “to be transported into the unity of the Spirit with the Father.”<sup>51</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, in his first encyclical *Deus Caritatis Est* (2005), also argued that the potential for persons to enter into union with God is his or her “primordial aspiration.”<sup>52</sup>

Ratzinger’s theological anthropology, rooted in the image of the Trinity, has strong resonance with the anthropology of the major religious traditions of the East. In an essay, “The Holy Spirit and the Church” (1989), he compared the anthropology that grows out of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity with the anthropology rooted in the Eastern doctrine of nirvana:

The Christian alternative to nirvana is the Trinity, that ultimate unity in which the distinction between I and Thou is not withdrawn but joined to each other in the Holy Spirit. In God there are Persons, and so he is precisely the realization of ultimate unity. God did not create the person so that he might be dissolved but so that he might open himself in his entire height and in his innermost depth—there, where the Holy Spirit embraces him and is the unity of the divided persons.<sup>53</sup>

In other words, “The unification of men...does not occur through the extinguishing of the person but rather through his completion, which means his infinite openness.”<sup>54</sup> As pope, he also emphasized that “this union is no mere fusion, a sinking in the nameless ocean of the Divine; it is a unity which creates love, a unity in which both God and man remain themselves and yet become fully one.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Images of Hope*, 66.

<sup>51</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 32.

<sup>52</sup> See Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritatis Est* (2007), #10.

<sup>53</sup> *Images of Hope*, 68.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>55</sup> *Deus Caritatis Est* #10.

Given God's purpose for humankind, Ratzinger sees the "original sin" of humanity as the devolution of human beings as persons of openness and relationality into an egoistic individuality.<sup>56</sup> In "*Communio*: A Program" (1992), he contrasted individuality with personality, suggesting that while individuality divides, true personality opens us beyond our boundaries towards a greater, universal "something" and even toward a greater, universal "someone."<sup>57</sup> Becoming a Christian therefore involves a conversion from such individuality into the mode of existence of the Holy Spirit,<sup>58</sup> of sharing in the fruitfulness of God that consists in an opening of ourselves and entering into a communion that becomes a "fusion of existences".<sup>59</sup>

Being a Christian is essentially conversion, and conversion in the Christian sense is not the changing of a few ideas, but rather a process of death. The limits of the I are broken. The I loses itself in order to find itself anew in a larger subject that spans heaven and earth, past, present, and future, and therein touches truth itself. This 'I and no longer I' [of Paul in Gal 2:20] is the Christian alternative to nirvana. We could also say: The Holy Spirit is this alternative.<sup>60</sup>

The mode of this communion or unity with God and each other is that of love. Stated another way, the mode of existence of the Holy Spirit that persons are meant to enter into is the mode of love that unites each person with one another. Ratzinger argued that it is through love that persons become capable of relating to God and through God to one another: "God desires love, which transforms man and through which he becomes

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<sup>56</sup> Ratzinger approves of De Lubac's statement: "The essence of original sin is the split into individuality." See *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 49.

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, "*Communio*: A Program," *Communio* 19, no. 3 (1992): 444.

<sup>58</sup> See *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 42.

<sup>59</sup> See *Called to Communion*: "Communion means 'fusion of existences'; the opening of the 'I,'" 37.

<sup>60</sup> *Images of Hope*, 71.

capable of relating to God, giving himself up to God.”<sup>61</sup> In addition, it is only because God first loved us that we are able to be transformed from the state of individuality by a love that opens us up to God and unites us with one another.<sup>62</sup>

How exactly does authentic love bring about communion and unity between God and humanity and between human persons? Pope Benedict XVI describes how love brings into being a “communion of will” between the lover and the loved:

To want the same thing, and to reject the same thing—was recognized by antiquity as the authentic content of love: the one becomes similar to the other, and this leads to a community of will and thought. The love-story between God and man consists in the very fact that this communion of will increases in a communion of thought and sentiment, and thus our will and God's will increasingly coincide: God's will is no longer for me an alien will, something imposed on me from without by the commandments, but it is now my own will, based on the realization that God is in fact more deeply present to me than I am to myself.<sup>63</sup>

This “communion of wills” between a person and God that is the content of love is fostered and developed through the practical actions of prayer. Ratzinger wrote in *The Feast of Faith* (1981), “Prayer is an act of being; it is affirmation, albeit not affirmation of myself as I am and of the world as it is, but affirmation of the ground of being and hence a purifying of myself and of the world from this ground upward.”<sup>64</sup> Hence, through prayer a person's thoughts and will are purified and brought into conformity with

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<sup>61</sup> *God is Near Us*, 32. Cited text originally published as Joseph Ratzinger, *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche* (Munich: Wewel, 1978).

<sup>62</sup> See Pope Benedict XVI, *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches*, ed. John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007): 150. Cited text originally from a lecture delivered during the *Journées Liturgiques de Fontgombault*, July 22-24, 2001.

<sup>63</sup> *Deus Caritatis Est* #17.

<sup>64</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986): 27. Originally published as *Das Fest des Glaubens: Versuche einer Theologie des Gottesdienstes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1981).

God's will. This transformation of being means that persons grow through prayer into an ever-closer unity of love with the Spirit of God.<sup>65</sup>

In summary, Ratzinger's theological anthropology develops out of his trinitarian theology. The goal of humankind is union with God and each other through a participation in the eternal love of the Trinity. It is reasonable therefore, to suggest that in Ratzinger's thought the destiny of humanity is to be drawn up into the fruitfulness of God through a transformation of sinful individuality into an existence of openness and love. Fostered through prayer, such love unites us to God in a "communion of wills" and through such union with God we are united with one another. The fruitfulness of God is thus made manifest in human beings where such a transformation from individuality to personality takes place.

### 3.3 *The Paschal Mystery as the Unleashing of God's Fruitfulness in the World*

Ratzinger often begins his explanation of New Testament Christology with the observation that the defining characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth was his intimate dialog and communion with his Father. This idea recurs throughout his writings. In *Behold the Pierced One* (1984), Ratzinger wrote, "According to the testimony of Holy Scripture, the center of the life and person of Jesus is his constant communication with the Father."<sup>66</sup>

In *The Feast of Faith*, Ratzinger also argued that the word "Son" most appropriately characterizes Jesus of Nazareth: "A fundamental word in the mouth of 'the Son' is

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<sup>65</sup> See *The Feast of Faith*: "Prayer, because of the transformation of being which it involves, means growing more and more into identity with the *pneuma* of Jesus, the Spirit of God," 31.

<sup>66</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986): 15. Originally published as *Schauen auf den Durchbohrten: Versuche zu einer spirituellen Christologie* (Einsiedeln : Johannes Verlag, 1984). Further on he wrote: "The entire gospel testimony is unanimous that Jesus' words and deeds flowed from his most intimate communion with the Father," Ibid., 17.

‘Abba.’ It is no accident that we find this word characterizing the figure of Jesus in the New Testament. It expresses his whole being, and all that he says to God in prayer is ultimately only an explication of his being.”<sup>67</sup> In *The God of Jesus Christ* (1976), Ratzinger argued that it is through Jesus’ constant prayer with the Father that we are able to see what God is like.<sup>68</sup> Thus the incarnation and Jesus’ subsequent life of prayer is God’s act of communicating God’s self to humanity.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless it is only in Christ’s death on the cross and his subsequent resurrection that God’s act of self-communication is perfected and the communion between God and humanity is fully consummated: “Christ as the Lord can be there among us and for us only because the Incarnation was not his last word. The Incarnation is perfected in the death on the Cross and in the Resurrection.”<sup>70</sup>

The central idea in Ratzinger’s theology of the cross is that Jesus, just as his life was a life of prayer, voluntarily and obediently transforms his death into an act of prayer and an act of love. In *Behold the Pierced One*, Ratzinger wrote, “[The Evangelists] all agree that his dying was itself an act of prayer, his death was a handing-over of himself to the Father.”<sup>71</sup> Instead of death destroying Jesus’ intimate communion with the Father,

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<sup>67</sup> *The Feast of Faith*, 26-7.

<sup>68</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 27.

<sup>69</sup> “God communicated himself to humanity by himself becoming man.” See “*Communio*: A Program,” 444.

<sup>70</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 183. Ratzinger also wrote: “The mystery of Christ is the mystery of the cross; the incarnation is only the beginning of that journey which reaches its culmination at Calvary.” See Joseph Ratzinger, “Free Expression and Obedience in the Church,” in *The Church: Readings in Theology*, ed. Hugo Rahner (New York, P.J. Kenedy, 1963): 203.

<sup>71</sup> *Behold the Pierced One*, 24. Earlier in the same work he wrote: “He fashioned his death into an act of prayer, an act of worship,” *Ibid.*, 22.



death itself is transformed: “Death, which, by its very nature, is the end, the destruction of every communication, is changed by him into an act of self-communication....”<sup>72</sup>

Furthermore, according to Ratzinger, Jesus’ act of prayer, his self-surrender to the Father, is also an act of love on behalf of all humankind: “The passive dimension of being put to death is transformed into the active dimension of love: death becomes the abandonment of himself to the Father for men.”<sup>73</sup> This transformation of violence and death into love is the victory over death and the redemption of all humanity:

The act of killing, of death, is changed into an act of love; violence is defeated by love. This is the fundamental transformation that the world needs and which alone can redeem the world. Since Christ in an act of love has transformed and defeated violence from within, death itself is transformed: love is stronger than death. It remains forever.<sup>74</sup>

Ratzinger further argued that this act of redemptive love and prayer is also a sacrifice of expiation, a saving act of the reconciling love of God made man.<sup>75</sup> Yet the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is unlike any kind of crude religious understanding of sacrifice as the destruction of something valuable in order to appease the wrath of an angry deity: “Now sacrifice takes the form of the Cross of Christ, of the love that in dying makes a gift of

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>73</sup> *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, 141-2. Cited text originally from a lecture delivered during the *Journées Liturgiques de Fontgombault*, 2001.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 82. See also *The Feast of Faith*, 32: “In Jesus, God participates in time. Through this participation he operates in time in the form of love. His love purifies men; through purification (and not otherwise) men are identified and united with him. Or we could say this: as a result of God’s participation in time in Jesus, love becomes the causality operating in the world to transform it; in any place, at any time, it can exercise its influence. As a cause, love does not vitiate the world’s mechanical causality but uses it and adopts it. Love is the power which God exercises in the world.”

<sup>75</sup> *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, 147. Cited text originally from a lecture delivered during the *Journées Liturgiques de Fontgombault*, 2001.

itself. Such sacrifice has nothing to do with destruction. It is an act of new creation, the restoration of creation to its true identity.”<sup>76</sup>

In Ratzinger’s understanding of Christ’s death on the cross as a sacrifice of expiation, his theology of redemption becomes clear. It is through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross that the prayer of Jesus of Nazareth is subsumed into the dialogue of eternal love within the Trinity.<sup>77</sup> Through this inclusion of the prayer of Jesus in the trinitarian dialogue, the whole of human existence is vicariously taken up into the transformation of love that Jesus effects on the cross.<sup>78</sup> In Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, he totally identifies himself with human beings such that he takes up into himself all of humanity’s sufferings and hopes, all the yearnings of creation, and bears it to God.<sup>79</sup> He is therefore united with the entire reality of human life and suffering. In this way our own life and suffering, hoping and loving, can participate in Jesus’ own sacrifice. Ratzinger, in *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (2000), described this total identification of Christ with humanity as the height of Christ’s achievement with the result that each person’s life may become fruitful:

The magnitude of Christ’s achievement consists precisely in his not remaining someone else, over and against us, who might thus relegate us once more to a merely passive role; he does not merely bear with us; rather, he bears us up; he identifies himself with us to such an extent that our sins belong to him and his being to us: he truly accepts us and takes us up, so that we ourselves become active with his support and alongside him, so that we ourselves cooperate and join in the sacrifice with him, participating in the mystery ourselves. *Thus our own*

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<sup>76</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000): 34. Originally published as *Einführung in den Geist der Liturgie* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2000).

<sup>77</sup> See *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 48-9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

*life and suffering, our own hoping and loving, can also become fruitful, in the new heart he has given us.*<sup>80</sup>

How is the event of the cross and the transformation effected in that historical event subsequently realized in people of later centuries? Ratzinger argued that it is through the resurrection that Christ is able to become “communicable” to those beyond his historical and bodily existence: “The Resurrection opened up the possibility of Jesus being present beyond the limitations of earthly corporeal existence and sharing himself out.”<sup>81</sup> Although Christ becomes spirit and the giver of life through His resurrection from the dead, nevertheless all the fullness of Christ continues to subsist in his material existence:

The Risen One is gift, is spirit who gives his life, ‘communicates,’ indeed, is communication. This means that there is no farewell to material existence; rather, in this way material existence achieves its goal.... And so in the transformation of the Resurrection, all the fullness of Christ continues to subsist but transformed in this way; now being a body and the gift of self are no longer mutually exclusive, but are implicit in each other.<sup>82</sup>

The idea that the risen Christ becomes “communicable” in the Paschal Mystery is described by Ratzinger as the source of the triune God’s fruitfulness in the world. In *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* (2002) he wrote, “This communion between God and man that is realized in the person of Jesus Christ for its own part becomes communicable to others in the Paschal Mystery....”<sup>83</sup> The Spirit, who is the fruitfulness of God in the world, proceeds from the crucified Lord as water flows from a spring: “For Augustine...Christ is the spring of living water (John 4&7)—*the crucified Lord is the*

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<sup>80</sup> *God is Near Us*, 50. Emphasis mine. Cited text originally from *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>82</sup> *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, 82. Cited text originally from a lecture given at the Eucharistic Congress of the Archdiocese of Benevento, Italy, June 2, 2002.

<sup>83</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 83.

*spring that makes the world fruitful.* The source of the Spirit is the crucified Christ.”<sup>84</sup>

Further on Ratzinger describes how the gifts of the Spirit are the fruits of the risen Christ and the fruit of his victory on the cross: “The gifts of the Spirit, in which the Spirit himself is ultimately the gift, are the gifts of the victorious Christ, the fruits of his victory, of his Ascension to the Father.”<sup>85</sup> Thus the risen Christ is fruitful through giving of himself in the Spirit, and this ability to give of himself through the centuries is a “fruit” of the cross: “So let us be ready to hear the call of Jesus Christ, who achieved the great success of God on the Cross; *he who, as the grain of wheat that died, has become fruitful down through the centuries*; the Tree of Life, in whom even today men may put their hope.”<sup>86</sup>

Finally, Ratzinger often writes about the strong link between the Paschal Mystery and the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The institution of the Eucharist is an anticipation of the sacrifice of the cross and the victory of the resurrection. It is also an interpretive key for understanding the meaning and significance of his death. Pope Benedict XVI, in *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007), writes:

In instituting the sacrament of the Eucharist, Jesus anticipates and makes present the sacrifice of the Cross and the victory of the resurrection.... By placing his gift in this context, Jesus shows the salvific meaning of his death and resurrection, a mystery which renews history and the whole cosmos.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 47. Emphasis mine. See also *The God of Jesus Christ*, 104: “The mystery of the Trinity is translated in the world into the mystery of the cross; and in it is found the fruitfulness from which the Holy Spirit proceeds.”

<sup>85</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 55.

<sup>86</sup> *God is Near Us*, 40-1. Emphasis mine. Cited text originally published in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*.

<sup>87</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* #10. Emphasis original. See also *God is Near Us*, 29: “The institution of the Eucharist is an anticipation of his death; it is the undergoing of a spiritual death. For Jesus shares himself out, he shares himself as the one who has been split up and torn apart into body and blood; in these words Jesus transforms his death into the spiritual act of affirmation, into the act of self-sharing love; into the act of adoration, which is offered to God, then from God is made available to men.” Later he wrote: “The

Not only does the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper both anticipate his death and transform it into a gift of love, it is through the institution of the Eucharist that Jesus creates an enduring presence of his sacrificial love in the world. In *Deus Caritatis Est*, Pope Benedict XVI states:

He anticipated his death and resurrection by giving his disciples, in the bread and wine, his very self, his body and blood as the new manna (cf. *Jn* 6:31-33). The ancient world had dimly perceived that man's real food—what truly nourishes him as man—is ultimately the *Logos*, eternal wisdom: this same *Logos* now truly becomes food for us—as love. The Eucharist draws us into Jesus' act of self-oblation. More than just statically receiving the incarnate *Logos*, we enter into the very dynamic of his self-giving.<sup>88</sup>

Thus the Eucharist itself has become the way in which persons participate and enter into the fruitfulness of God. Jesus himself becomes fruitful in the Paschal Mystery and perpetuates this fruitfulness down through the ages in the sacrament of the Eucharist, in which he shares himself out to human beings in the form of self-giving love.

#### 4. *The Eucharistic-Communion Ecclesiology of Joseph Ratzinger*

Given this background of Ratzinger's overall theological context, I next explicate in greater detail Ratzinger's ecclesiology. In particular I hope to show how his ecclesiology develops out of his trinitarian theology and his understanding of the meaning of the Paschal Mystery. In connection with these two cornerstones of his ecclesiology I shall also describe his understanding of the sacramental nature of the church, its essential structure and its fundamental institutional form.

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words that Jesus spoke are an anticipation of his death, a transformation of his death into an event of love, a transformation of what is meaningless into something that is significant, significant for us," *Ibid.*, 43. Both texts originally published in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*. See also *Behold the Pierced One*, 24: "His dying words fuse with the reality of the Supper. For the event of the Supper consists in Jesus sharing his body and his blood, i.e., his earthly existence; he gives and communicates himself. In other words, the event of the Supper is an anticipation of death, the transformation of death into an act of love."

<sup>88</sup> *Deus Caritatis Est* #13.

#### 4.1 *Trinitarian Communion as an Archetype and Foundation for Ecclesiology*

As with Ratzinger's theology in general, so also with his ecclesiology it is important to begin with the connection between the triune God and the church. In *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* Ratzinger argued that although ecclesiology is most directly dependent on Christology, it necessarily must open itself up into a trinitarian ecclesiology:

Ecclesiology appears as dependent upon Christology, as belonging to it. Yet because no one can talk correctly about Christ, the Son, without also straightway talking about the Father, and because no one can talk about the Father and the Son without listening to the Holy Spirit, then the christological aspect of ecclesiology is necessarily extended into a trinitarian ecclesiology.<sup>89</sup>

For Ratzinger, the Trinity is the archetype, measure and foundation of the church. In the Trinity, humanity, which has fallen into the sin of individuality and division, once again becomes the one Adam, the church.<sup>90</sup> The church, understood as the new united humanity, is made real through the activity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>91</sup> For this reason Ratzinger described the church as the icon of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit becomes visible and depictable in the Church. If Christ is the icon of the Father, the image of God, and at the same time the image of man, so the Church is the image of the Holy Spirit. From here we can understand what the Church actually is in the deepest part of her nature: namely, the overcoming of the boundary between I and Thou, the union of men among themselves through the radical transcendence of self into eternal love. Church is mankind being brought into the way of life of the trinitarian God.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 140. Earlier in the same work he wrote: "The theology of the Trinity becomes a direct standard for ecclesiology," *ibid.*, 52.

<sup>90</sup> *Images of Hope*, 65. Emphasis mine.

<sup>91</sup> "If the Holy Spirit expresses and is the unity of God, then he is the real vital element of the Church in which distinction is reconciled in togetherness and the dispersed pieces of Adam are fit together again." *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-9.

Thus, the movement of persons from division and individuality into a unity created through the transcendence of the individual self into the eternal love of the Trinity is the deepest core of what it means to be “church.” Such a movement into unity is also itself an apt representation of the Holy Spirit, who is the principle of fruitfulness that comprises the unity of God.

Looked at from a complementary angle, the fellowship and communion that result from this movement of self-transcendence are a specific gift of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the love given by the Father and the grace offered by the Lord Jesus. Preaching on Second Corinthians 13:14, Pope Benedict XVI says:

‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.’ These words, probably echoed in the worship of the newborn Church, emphasize how the free gift of the Father in Jesus Christ is realized and expressed in the communion brought about by the Holy Spirit. This interpretation presents ‘fellowship’ [*koinonia*] as *a specific gift of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of the love given by God the Father and the grace offered by the Lord Jesus*.<sup>93</sup>

Grace, love and fellowship are “different aspects of the one divine action for our salvation. This action creates the Church and makes the Church,” which is as St. Cyprian once described, “a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>94</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI further describes the nature of the communion or fellowship that constitutes the church as having both a “vertical” and a “horizontal” dimension, in which the former is the model and source for the latter. Appealing to John 17 he says:

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<sup>93</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *The Apostles: The Origins of the Church and their Co-Workers* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007): 19-20. Emphasis mine. Cited text originally from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 29, 2006.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

The idea of communion as participation in Trinitarian life is illuminated with special intensity in John's Gospel. Here the communion of love that binds the Son to the Father and to men and women is at the same time the model and source of the fraternal communion that must unite the disciples with one another: 'Love one another as I have loved you;' 'that they may all be one even as we are one.' Hence it is communion of men and women with the Trinitarian God and communion of men and women with one another.<sup>95</sup>

In his book *Called to Communion* (1991), Ratzinger argued that it is only through vertical unification with God that the horizontal unification of humanity can be realized:

[The church] is the dynamic process of horizontal and vertical unification. It is vertical unification, which brings about the union of man with the triune love of God, thus also integrating man in and with himself. But because the Church takes man to the point toward which his entire being gravitates, she automatically becomes horizontal unification as well: only by the impulse power of vertical unification can horizontal unification, by which I mean the coming together of divided humanity, also successfully take place.<sup>96</sup>

Thus the horizontal communion of persons that creates the church is the common fellowship of love that exists between individual persons and the triune God.

The nature of the communion that exists between persons and the triune God is the point of departure for Ratzinger's ecclesiology in terms of how the church is realized in historical and concrete terms as the body of Christ and the new People of God. Before describing these aspects of his ecclesiology, it is important to clarify in what way persons participate in the eternal love of the Triune God. I have already described above how Jesus Christ, who in his person is the communion between God and humanity,<sup>97</sup> has become fruitful or communicable through his death and resurrection. This fruitfulness of the risen Lord is the source and foundation of the church's existence:

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> *Called to Communion*, 76.

<sup>97</sup> In *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, Ratzinger writes: "The heart of Christian communion has its origin in Christology: the incarnated Son is the 'communion' between God and me. Being a Christian is in reality nothing other than partaking in the mystery of the Incarnation," 77.



The Church originates, and has her continuing existence, in the Lord's communicating himself to men, entering into communion with them, and thus bringing them into communion with one another. The Church is the Lord's communion with us, which at the same time brings about the true communication of men with one another.<sup>98</sup>

For Ratzinger, communion with the triune God always begins in an encounter with the risen Lord. Thus, in *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* he wrote, "Fellowship with God is mediated by the fellowship of God with man, which is Christ in person; the encounter with Christ brings about fellowship with him and, thus, with the Father in the Holy Spirit; on this basis it unites men with one another."<sup>99</sup> Any experience of "church" therefore must always have its root in an experience of the risen Christ.

In summary, for Ratzinger the church is the communion of persons that is brought about through communion with the triune God. Communion with the triune God is always mediated through an encounter with the incarnate and risen Christ who has become communicable and fruitful in the Paschal Mystery. In order therefore to further penetrate Ratzinger's understanding of ecclesiality, especially how it relates to the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities, it is necessary to explore how persons concretely experience or come into relationship with the risen Christ. This brings us to an examination of Ratzinger's understanding of the church in relation to the Eucharist.

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<sup>98</sup> *God is Near Us*, 7. Cited text originally published as "Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine."

<sup>99</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 130. He also wrote: "The Church is communion—not merely communion of men with one another, but, by medium of the death and resurrection of Jesus, communion with Christ, the Son who became man, and thus communion with the eternal triune love of God," *Ibid.*, 75.

#### 4.2 *Ecclesia as the Body of Christ and the New People of God in the Eucharist*

In Pope Benedict XVI's reading of the New Testament, Jesus of Nazareth came to gather together the people of God: "From the first moment of his salvific activity, Jesus of Nazareth strives to gather together the People of God. Even if his preaching is always an appeal for personal conversion, in reality he continually aims to build the People of God whom he came to bring together, purify and save."<sup>100</sup> The clearest indication of this is Jesus calling of the twelve disciples.<sup>101</sup> This does not mean however that for Benedict XVI Jesus intended in this action to "found" a new church. In *Behold the Pierced One*, Ratzinger wrote:

Jesus did not need to start by founding a People of God (the 'Church'). It was already there. Jesus' task was only to renew this People by deepening its relationship to God and by opening it up for all mankind. Therefore the question of whether Jesus intended to found a Church is a false question because it is unhistorical.<sup>102</sup>

The "gathering" of the people of God that already existed is what the New Testament refers to as the *ecclesia* of God (a translation of the Hebrew *qahal*):

Because of Israel's continuing bondage, a *qahal* from God himself, i.e. a new gathering and foundation of the people, was a common Jewish expectation at the time of Christ. *Ecclesia* thus means that the Jewish hope for a new *qahal* is granted in Christ, she is the chosen final gathering of God's people.<sup>103</sup>

The New Testament use of *ecclesia*, then, "defines the new people both in terms of continuity of the covenant in saving history and of the newness of the mystery of Christ."<sup>104</sup> The church is a continuation of Israel, even though Christians do not descend

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<sup>100</sup> *The Apostles*, 10. Cited text originally from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 15, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-1.

<sup>102</sup> *Behold the Pierced One*, 30.

<sup>103</sup> *Called to Communion*, 31.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

from Abraham: “They enter into it, says the New Testament, by their descent from Christ and thereby also become children of Abraham. Thus, whoever belongs to Christ belongs to the people of God.”<sup>105</sup> Christians, who are not a unified people by any human standard, can only be the people of God through inclusion in Christ, the son of God and the son of Abraham.<sup>106</sup> Ratzinger emphasized that Christians “are the people of God in no other way than on the basis of the crucified and risen body of Christ. It is only in living relation to him that we become the people of God....”<sup>107</sup> It is through a new birth that Christians are put into a living relationship with the risen Christ:

The term *ecclesia*, Church, is the New Testament’s modification of the Old Testament concept of the people of God. It is used because in it is included the idea that it is only through the new birth in Christ that what was not a people has been able to become a people. Paul then consistently summed up this necessary Christological process of transformation in the concept of the Body of Christ.<sup>108</sup>

Ratzinger, who in his dissertation studied the New Testament interpretation of the term ‘People of God’,<sup>109</sup> argued in *The Ratzinger Report* that the Pauline concept of the Body of Christ is the concept that truly delineates how those who are “not a people” can constitute the People of God:

‘People of God’ in Scripture is a reference to Israel in its relationship of prayer and fidelity to the Lord. But to limit the definition of the Church to that expression means not to give expression to the New Testament understanding of the Church in its fullness. Here ‘People of God’ actually refers always to the Old Testament element of the Church, to her continuity with Israel. But the Church receives her New Testament character more distinctively in the concept of the ‘Body of Christ’. One is Church and one is a member thereof, not through a

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<sup>105</sup> *Salt of the Earth*, 187-8.

<sup>106</sup> Ratzinger refers to Christians as a “non-people,” whereby he means Christians are not by nature a single unified people of any human category, ethnic or otherwise.

<sup>107</sup> *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 19. See also *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 55: “The new people of God are only a people through communion with Christ who unites them from above and from within.”

<sup>108</sup> *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 18.

<sup>109</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (Munich, 1954).

sociological adherence, but precisely through incorporation in this Body of the Lord through baptism and the Eucharist.<sup>110</sup>

The identification or incorporation into the Body of Christ through the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist is the concrete way in which persons are brought into the trinitarian dialog of love between Father and Son:

Jesus made the old People of God into a new People by adopting those who believe in him into the community of his own self (of his 'Body'). He achieved this by transforming his death into an act of prayer, an act of love, and thus by making himself communicable.... By doing so he has made it possible for people to participate in his most intimate and personal act of being, i.e. his dialogue with the Father.<sup>111</sup>

It is therefore through the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist that persons are adopted into the community of Christ's Body in which people are truly able to benefit from the "fruitfulness" or "communicability" of the risen Lord.

The eucharistic basis of the Body of Christ concept is central to Ratzinger's understanding of how persons enter into communion with the triune God and in doing so enter into communion with one another and thus constitute the church. It is in the Eucharist that the true nature of the church is expressed:

This expression ['Body of Christ'] takes as its starting point the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ and is therefore more than just an image: *it is the expression of the true nature of the Church*. In the Eucharist we receive the Body of the Lord and, thus, become one body with him; we all receive the one body and, thus, ourselves become 'all one in Christ Jesus.'<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *The Ratzinger Report*, 47.

<sup>111</sup> *Behold the Pierced One*, 30.

<sup>112</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 102. Emphasis mine. See also *ibid.*, 105: "Because the Eucharist is the New Covenant, it is the renewal of the assembly at Sinai, and that is why, on the basis of the word and the Body and Blood of Christ, it brings into being the People of God." See also *Called to Communion*, 28-9: "The institution of the most holy Eucharist...is the concrete foundation of a new people.... These disciples become a 'people' through communion with the body and blood of Jesus, which is simultaneously communion with God."

Hence the church in its innermost nature is a communion, but it is particularly and concretely a communion or fellowship in and with the eucharistic Body of Christ.<sup>113</sup>

For Ratzinger communion ecclesiology is therefore essentially eucharistic ecclesiology.<sup>114</sup> The church is founded and comes into being in the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper when Jesus gives the disciples the liturgy of his death and resurrection.<sup>115</sup> Not only was the church brought into being at the Last Supper but it continues to receive its existence afresh in each celebration of the Eucharist: “The Eucharist...forever remains the place where the Church is generated, where the Lord himself never ceases to found her anew.”<sup>116</sup> The Eucharist and the church in Ratzinger’s thought are often strongly identified. In *Principles of Catholic Theology* he wrote, “The Church is the celebration of the Eucharist; the Eucharist is the Church; they do not simply stand side by side they are one and the same.”<sup>117</sup> Likewise in *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* he wrote, “The Church is built up in the Eucharist; indeed, the Church *is* the Eucharist. To receive Communion means becoming the Church, because it means becoming one body with him.”<sup>118</sup> The church is the Eucharist in the sense that it is the unity created in eucharistic communion, the “unity of the many in and through the one

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<sup>113</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, “Primacy, Episcopate, and Apostolic Succession,” in *The Episcopate and the Primacy*, Karl Rahner and Joseph Ratzinger (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962): 45. Originally published as “Primat, Episkopat und successio apostolica,” *Catholica* 13 (1959): 260-77.

<sup>114</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 131.

<sup>115</sup> See *Called to Communion*, 75. See also *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 8.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>117</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 53. See also *Called to Communion*, 77: “The Church is effectively realized in the eucharistic celebration, in which the word of preaching is also present.... It is here that the event of gathering begins.”

<sup>118</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 103. Emphasis original.

Christ.”<sup>119</sup> The Eucharist joins men and women with Christ and therefore with another. In this way it creates the church. The church in turn lives in eucharistic communities.<sup>120</sup>

#### 4.3 *The Church-Communio as the Sacrament of Salvation*

A critical aspect of ecclesiality for Ratzinger is that the church is essentially a sacramental reality. The sacramentality of the church consists in an existence that is *received* from God and which cannot be created by humanity. In *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, Ratzinger wrote:

An essential element of the Church is that of receiving, just as faith comes from hearing and is not the product of ones’ own reflections. For faith is the encounter with what I cannot think up myself but with what must come to encounter me. The term we use for this structure of receiving and encounter is ‘sacrament.’ And part of the basic structure of sacrament is that nobody administers it to himself or herself.<sup>121</sup>

Thus the church is not something any group of Christians can independently create.

Ratzinger has argued rather that Christians must seek out the church that is the sacramental Body of Christ: “The Church is not something one can make but only something one can receive, and indeed receive from where it already is and where it really is: from the sacramental community of his body that progresses through history.”<sup>122</sup> The sacramental community lives from the worship of God which it does not create but rather receives.<sup>123</sup> This sacramental approach to ecclesiality is for Ratzinger completely theocentric because “the foreground is occupied, not by the group of men

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>120</sup> See *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 8.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> See *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 41.

composing her, but by the gift of God that turns man around toward a new being that he cannot give to himself, to a communion he can only receive as a gift.”<sup>124</sup>

While the sacramentality of the church is essentially a structure of receiving and encounter, the content of this sacramentality is the unity and communion of the church that serves as a sign of salvation for the world. In *Principles of Catholic Theology*, Ratzinger stated:

The innermost core of the concept of Church and the deepest meaning of the sacrament of unity is: the Church is communion; she is God’s communing with men in Christ and hence the communing of men with each other—and thus is the sacrament, sign and instrument of salvation.<sup>125</sup>

In fact, because the sacramentality of the church in general and the individual sacraments in particular are to serve as a sign to the world, Ratzinger argued that such sacramentality can only be effective in unity:

The notion of sacrament is related to notion of unity. The individual sacraments refer to the sacrament of unity to which they are bound. Only in unity can they be effective; unity is an integral part of the sacrament itself, the ground on which the sacrament rests and the means to support the sacrament.<sup>126</sup>

Earlier, in *Introduction to Christianity*, he wrote, “The concrete unity of the common faith testifying to itself in the Word and of the common table of Jesus Christ is an essential part of the sign that the Church is to erect in the world.”<sup>127</sup>

The sacramental nature of the church is realized and expressed in the celebration of the individual sacraments of the church.<sup>128</sup> This practical realization in the individual sacraments of the sacramentality of the church is for Pope Benedict XVI a sacramental

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<sup>124</sup> *Introduction to Christianity*, 336.

<sup>125</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 53.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>127</sup> *Introduction to Christianity*, 346.

<sup>128</sup> See *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 48.

economy of salvation that the risen Christ established and which is now made concrete in individual Christian lives through the Spirit.<sup>129</sup> While all seven sacraments are practical realizations of the church's sacramentality, the celebration of the Eucharist in particular is the preeminent sign to the world of God's unifying love and as such manifests the sacramentality of the church most clearly.<sup>130</sup> Pope Benedict XVI states, "The *res* of the sacrament of the Eucharist is the unity of the faithful within ecclesial communion. The Eucharist is thus found at the root of the Church as a mystery of communion."<sup>131</sup> In the celebration of the Eucharist the church truly expresses its deepest nature as the unity of persons in and with the Body of Christ.

#### 4.4 *The Structure of Ecclesial Communion*

Essential to Ratzinger's *communio*-eucharistic ecclesiology is its "we" structure. In *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, Ratzinger wrote, "The 'we' structure is an essential component of Christianity. The believer is never alone: to become a believer means stepping out of one's isolation to become part of the 'we' of the children of God."<sup>132</sup> This "we" structure of the church is rooted in the "we" structure of triune God.<sup>133</sup> Because of the essential relatedness of the church as a communion, it is impossible for individuals or groups to anoint themselves as "the church." Ratzinger wrote, "Nobody can say 'I am the Church.' Everyone must say 'We are the Church.' And this 'we' is not

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<sup>129</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis* #16.

<sup>130</sup> See Joseph Ratzinger, "Commentary on Article 26 of the Constitution on the Church," in *Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, ed. Peter Foote et al. (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969): 57.

<sup>131</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* #15.

<sup>132</sup> *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 30.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.



a group that cuts itself off from others but a group that inserts itself into the entire community of all the members of Christ, living and dead.”<sup>134</sup>

This essential “we” structure enables Ratzinger to say exactly what the local church is not. In *Principles of Catholic Theology*, he emphasized that the local church is not a club or association that is constituted by mutual consent, but rather receives its being from outside of itself.<sup>135</sup> He rejects a congregational ecclesiology that understands the local church as a self-sufficient assembly of believers: “Nobody can turn himself or herself into the Church. A group cannot come together, read the New Testament and say that we are now the Church because the Lord is present wherever two or three are gathered in his name.”<sup>136</sup> Such an understanding of ecclesiality, according to Ratzinger, is not a definitive or exhaustive statement of the whole of the local church’s reality.<sup>137</sup>

The “we” structure of the local churches also argues against the *de facto* situation today of multiple, divided denominational communities that are not in full communion with one another. Again, Ratzinger regards this as a false pluralism, incompatible with the pluralism of local churches found in the New Testament as well as the pluralism found within the local churches of today’s Catholic Church.<sup>138</sup> A healthy pluralism of

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 6. See also *Salt of the Earth*, 188: “Not just anyone is the comprehensive ‘we’ of the Church with the corresponding authority to make decisions, but only everyone together is this ‘we’, and the individual group is this ‘we’ only insofar as it lives in the whole.”

<sup>135</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 37. See also *ibid.*, 39-40.

<sup>136</sup> *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 10.

<sup>137</sup> See *Called to Communion*, 82.

<sup>138</sup> See *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 252: “The plurality of local churches in the New Testament is not to be equated with the plurality of denominational churches of today.... Thus it becomes clear that the plurality of local churches which together form the Catholic Church signifies something quite different from the pluralism of the denominational churches which are not integrated in a concrete single church and behind which are found hidden diverse institutional forms of Christian existence as well as different theological ideas about the spiritual reality of the church.” In “Luther and the Unity of the Churches: An Interview with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger,” *Communio* 11, no. 3 (1984): 221. Originally published as

local churches in the one church necessarily raises the question of the relation of the local church to the universal church in the “we” structure of the church. This has been a question of particular concern for Ratzinger, who as prefect of the CDF released the document *Communiois notio* (1992) in order to address this relationship. He has also had a significant debate with Walter Kasper about the ontological priority of the universal church over the local church.<sup>139</sup>

As a theologian and professor, however, Ratzinger emphasized that the whole church is present in the local church. In a 1965 article, “Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” Ratzinger likened the local churches to living cells in a biological organism rather than separate parts of a larger organization.<sup>140</sup> In coming together to hear the word of God and celebrate the Eucharist the whole church is manifested in each local community.<sup>141</sup> This manifestation of the whole church in each local church is rooted in the oneness of the Body of Christ.<sup>142</sup> A consequence of the fact that the Body of the Lord is one is that “catholicity” is an essential element of the local church if it is to be called “church” in the theological sense. Thus, Ratzinger wrote, “If, as Church, a community isolates itself from the whole, *it immediately ceases to exist as*

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“Luther und die Einheit der Kirchen,” *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 12 (1983): 568-82. See also *Theological Highlights*, 71.

<sup>139</sup> For a review of this public debate, see Kilian McDonnell, “The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and Local Churches,” *Theological Studies* 63 (2002): 227-250.

<sup>140</sup> See “Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” 44.

<sup>141</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 252-3. See also “Commentary on Article 26 of the Constitution on the Church,” 57.

<sup>142</sup> See *God is Near Us*, 119-20. Cited text originally published as Joseph Ratzinger, “Celebrating in Communion with the Pope,” the sermon for Papal Sunday, July 10, 1977, in St. Michael’s Church in Munich, published in *Ordinariats-Korrespondenz* 03-10/77. See also *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 252-3. See also “*Communio*: A Program,” 447.

*Church.*”<sup>143</sup> In *Called to Communion* Ratzinger again made this argument: “A Church that was not catholic would not even have ecclesial reality.... *Communio* includes the dimension of catholicity by virtue of the range of the mystery of Christ. *Communio* is catholic, or it simply does not exist at all.”<sup>144</sup>

#### 4.5 *The Fundamental Institutional Elements of Communion*

When Ratzinger discusses the fundamental institutional structures of the church, it is clear that he believes that the sacramental nature of the church implies that certain concrete features of the church cannot be changed by a consensus vote. Once again, this is because “the Church of Christ is not a party, not an association, not a club. Her deep and permanent structure is not democratic but sacramental, consequently hierarchical.”<sup>145</sup> Behind the exterior of the visible church lie particular fundamental structures of communion that are of divine institution:

The Church is indeed composed of men who organize her external visage. But behind this, the fundamental structures are willed by God himself and therefore they are inviolable. Behind the human exterior stands the mystery of a more than human reality, in which reformers, sociologists, organizers have no authority whatsoever.<sup>146</sup>

Because of this “extra-human” reality found in certain institutional elements of the church, such elements cannot be rebuilt or demolished in just any fashion.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 253. Emphasis mine. See also “Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” 45. See also *Theological Highlights*, 71.

<sup>144</sup> *Called to Communion*, 44 and 82.

<sup>145</sup> *The Ratzinger Report*, 49.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>147</sup> See *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 147.

But which elements of the institutional church are irreformable according to Ratzinger? In *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* he wrote that there is ultimately only one such element:

What are the fundamental institutional elements in the Church, which constantly bring order in her life and make their mark on her? Certainly, sacramental office in its various grades... : the sacrament that most significantly goes by the name of *ordo* is the ultimate and only enduring and obligatory structure that constitutes...the predetermined set form of organization in the Church and that makes her an 'institution.'<sup>148</sup>

Furthermore, the sacrament of order must take the episcopal form. For Ratzinger, it cannot be changed or replaced, because it is the form of the sacrament instituted by the Lord himself.<sup>149</sup> Thus, it is clear that for Ratzinger the episcopal form of church organization is part of the very nature of the Catholic Church.<sup>150</sup>

Nevertheless, despite this fundamental episcopal structure, the institutional elements of the church do not reveal the defining characteristics of the church itself. In *Introduction to Christianity*, Ratzinger wrote, "One thing is clear: the Church is not to be deduced from her organization; the organization is to be understood from the Church."<sup>151</sup> Rather the church is more adequately defined on the basis of its eucharistic worship: "The Church is not defined as a matter of offices and organization but on the basis of her worship of God: as a community at one table around the risen Christ, who gathers and unites them everywhere."<sup>152</sup> Hence even in a discussion of essential institutional structures of the church, Ratzinger returns to his view that the worship of God in the

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>149</sup> "Luther and the Unity of the Churches: An Interview with Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger," 221.

<sup>150</sup> See *The Ratzinger Report*, 60: "The very nature of the Catholic Church is based on an episcopal structure."

<sup>151</sup> *Introduction to Christianity*, 346.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 334.

eucharistic mystery that builds the community into a unity of love is the essential and defining characteristic of the church.

## 5. *The Nature of the Eucharistic Mystery*

The goal of this section is to ascertain in precise detail how Ratzinger understands the eucharistic mystery that makes real the one sacrifice of Christ and which has the power to transform and unite persons into a communion rooted in the eternal love of the triune God. Here, I shall examine the centrality of the Eucharist in his ecclesiology in order to understand what Ratzinger believes is required for the authentic and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery and whether this reality exists in non-Catholic Christian communities. In understanding what he considers to be lacking in the eucharistic celebrations of Protestant and Anglican communities, I hope to shed light on his evaluation of their ecclesiality.

### 5.1 *The Eucharistic Prayer at the Heart of the Eucharistic Mystery*

As a prelude to discussing the essence of the eucharistic sacrifice at the heart of the eucharistic mystery, it is important to describe Ratzinger's general understanding of sacrifice. In *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (2000), Ratzinger undertook the critical task of recovering a more biblical understanding of worship and sacrifice from what he considered to be many misunderstandings:

In all religions sacrifice is at the heart of worship. But this is a concept that has been buried under the debris of endless misunderstandings. The common view is that sacrifice has something to do with destruction. It means handing over to God a reality that is in some way precious to man; What pleasure is God supposed to take in destruction? ...True surrender to God looks very different. It consists—according to the Fathers, in fidelity to biblical thought—in the union of man and creation with God. Belonging to God has nothing to do with destruction or non-being: it is rather a way of being. It means emerging from the state of separation,

of apparent autonomy, of existing only for oneself and in oneself. It means losing oneself as the only possible way of finding oneself (cf. Mk 8:35; Mt 10:39). That is why St. Augustine could say that the true ‘sacrifice’ is the *civitas Dei*, that is, love-transformed mankind, the divinization of creation and the surrender of all things to God: God all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15:28). That is the purpose of the world. That is the essence of sacrifice and worship.<sup>153</sup>

Writing as Pope Benedict XVI, he put it succinctly: “What then, does sacrifice consist of?

Not in destruction, not in this or that thing, but in the transformation of man. In the fact that he becomes himself conformed to God. He becomes conformed to God when he becomes love.”<sup>154</sup> The concept of sacrifice for Ratzinger is just another way of talking about the same mystery of salvation, albeit in language somewhat different than the language of communion. The advantage of using the language of sacrifice is that it highlights the aspect of salvation concerned with redemption and healing:

If ‘sacrifice’ in its essence is simply returning to love and therefore divinization, worship now has a new aspect: the healing of wounded freedom, atonement, purification, deliverance from estrangement. The essence of worship, of sacrifice—the process of assimilation, of growth in love, and thus the way into freedom—remains unchanged. But now it assumes the aspect of healing, the loving transformation of broken freedom, of painful expiation. Worship is directed to the Other in himself, to his all-sufficiency, but now it refers itself to the Other who alone can extricate me from the knot that I myself cannot untie. Redemption now needs the Redeemer.<sup>155</sup>

With this understanding of sacrifice it is now possible to explore Ratzinger’s understanding of how the eucharistic sacrifice is made real in the liturgy. In explaining Ratzinger’s theology of the Paschal Mystery above, I showed that for Ratzinger it is in

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<sup>153</sup> *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 28.

<sup>154</sup> *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, 148. See also *ibid.*, 149: “Sacrifice consists then in a process of transformation, in the conformity of man to God, in his *theiosis*, as the fathers would say. It consists in the abolition of difference—in the union between God and man, between God and creation: ‘God all in all’ (1 Cor 15:28).” Cited text originally from a lecture delivered during the *Journées Liturgiques de Fontgombault*, 2001.

<sup>155</sup> *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 33.

Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and his subsequent resurrection that persons are taken up into Christ's sacrifice and into his dialog and prayer with his Father. I also demonstrated that in his view it is in the celebration of the Eucharist that the church is built up and the communion in which it consists is deepened. These two points of Ratzinger's theology coincide in the understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. It is in the eucharistic sacrifice that the benefits of the Paschal Mystery reach into the lives of the assembly and thus build up the church as a communion:

And so in the Christian liturgy we not only receive something from the past but also become contemporaries with what lies at the foundation of that liturgy. Here is the real heart and true grandeur of the celebration of the Eucharist, which is more, much more than a meal. In the Eucharist we are caught up and made contemporary with the Paschal Mystery of Christ....<sup>156</sup>

In the sacrifice of the Eucharist the vicarious sacrifice of Christ concretely connects with the worshipping assembly and makes its existential imprint on their lives, thereby serving as the key anthropological link between the Paschal Mystery and the everyday lives of believers:

This liturgy is, as we have seen, not about replacement, but about representation, vicarious sacrifice [*Stellvertretung*]. Now we can see what this distinction means. The liturgy is not about the sacrificing of animals, of a 'something' that is ultimately alien to me. This liturgy is founded on the Passion endured by a man who with his 'I' reaches into the mystery of the living God himself, by the man who is the Son. So it can never be a mere *actio liturgica*. Its origin also bears within it its future in the sense that representation, vicarious sacrifice, takes up into itself those whom it represents; it is not external to them, but a shaping influence on them. Becoming contemporary with the Pasch of Christ in the liturgy of the Church is also, in fact, an anthropological reality; it is meant to be

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 57. See also *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 110: "The words of institution are a theology of the Cross and a theology of the Resurrection—they reach right down into the heart of the historical event, and in the inwardness of Jesus that transcends time they rise up so that this essential core of the event now reaches into every age: this inner core now becomes the point at which time opens up to God's eternity. That is why the 'memorial' constituted by the Eucharist is more than a remembrance of something in the past: it is the act of entering into that inner core which can no longer pass away."

indeed a *logikē latreia*, the ‘logicizing’ of my existence, my interior contemporaneity with the self-giving of Christ. His self-giving is meant to become mine, so that I become contemporary with the Pasch of Christ and assimilated unto God.<sup>157</sup>

Hence it is in the eucharistic sacrifice that the fruitfulness of the risen Christ, i.e. Christ in his communicability, is received and made fruitful in the lives of those communicating. It is here that Christ’s sacrifice, understood in terms of a sacrifice that consists in an existential transformation into self-giving love, is appropriated as the assembly’s own sacrifice. Pope Benedict XVI reaffirmed this in his recent post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*:

Catholic doctrine, in fact, affirms that the Eucharist, as the sacrifice of Christ, is also the sacrifice of the Church, and thus of all the faithful. This insistence on sacrifice—a ‘making sacred’—expresses all the existential depth implied in the transformation of our human reality as taken up by Christ (cf. *Phil* 3:12).<sup>158</sup>

In summary it is in the sacrament of the Eucharist that the Paschal Mystery, which is directed towards the fulfillment and healing of humanity, finds its existential and anthropological point of contact with the contemporary church.

While the above description of the eucharistic sacrifice explains how the fruitfulness of the Paschal Mystery becomes fruitful in the church, in a certain sense nothing is really answered until it become clear *how* exactly the celebration of the Eucharist accomplishes such a transformation. What exactly happens in the Eucharist to foster or enable such a transformation? What is the “mechanism” or “channel”<sup>159</sup> in the

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<sup>157</sup> *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 57-8. See also *ibid.*, 58: “The liturgy does indeed have a bearing on everyday life, on me in my personal existence. Its aim, as St. Paul says, is that ‘our bodies’ (that is, our bodily existence here on earth) become ‘a living sacrifice’, united to the Sacrifice of Christ.”

<sup>158</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* #70.

<sup>159</sup> Ratzinger also wrote of the Eucharist serving as such a “channel” from the risen Lord to his people in *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 122: “As the presence of the divine and human love of Christ, [the Eucharist]



sacrament that allows such a transformation to occur? In a 2002 lecture given at the Eucharistic Congress of the Archdiocese of Benevento Italy, Ratzinger stated that “the great prayer of praise” that contained as its center the very words of Jesus was for early Christians the essential reality of the Last Supper:

The Eucharist was recognized as the essential reality of the Last Supper, what we call today the Eucharistic Prayer, which derives directly from the prayer of Jesus on the eve of his Passion and is the heart of the new spiritual sacrifice, the motive for which many fathers designated the Eucharist simply as *oratio* (prayer), as the ‘sacrifice of the Word,’ as a spiritual sacrifice, but which becomes also material and matter transformed: bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, the new food, which nourishes us for the resurrection, for eternal life.<sup>160</sup>

Put another way, Ratzinger argued that at the Last Supper, Jesus transformed his death into a verbal form of prayer, thereby enabling his death to be present throughout the centuries in the prayer that is spoken. He made this point in his book *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche* (1978):

The Roman Canon...is the direct descendant and continuation of this prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper and is thereby the heart of the Eucharist. It is the genuine vehicle of the sacrifice, since thereby Jesus Christ transformed his death into verbal form—into a prayer—and, in so doing, changed the world. As a result, this death is able to be present for us, because it continues to live in the prayer, and the prayer runs right down through the centuries. A further consequence is that we can share in this death, because we can participate in this transforming prayer, can join in praying it. This, then is the new sacrifice he has given us, in which he includes us all: Because he turned death into a proclamation of thanksgiving and love, he is now able to be present down through all ages as the wellspring of life, and we can enter into him by praying with him. He gathers up, so to speak, the pitiful fragments of our suffering, our loving, our hoping, and our waiting into this

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is also always the channel open from the man Jesus to the people who are his ‘members,’ themselves becoming a Eucharist and thereby themselves a ‘heart’ and a ‘love’ for the Church.”

<sup>160</sup> *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, 72. Cited text originally from a lecture given at the Eucharistic Congress of the Archdiocese of Benevento, Italy, 2002.

prayer, into a great flood in which it shares in his life, so that thereby we truly share in the sacrifice.<sup>161</sup>

As Ratzinger notes, the sacrifice and offering of Christ is made real in the verbal form of the eucharistic prayer, in which the “word of the Word” is combined with the human words of the worshipping assembly, thereby joining the community with Jesus’ own sacrifice and worship.<sup>162</sup> This interpretation of the eucharistic sacrifice dispels the notion that the Eucharist is a sacrifice that is made effective through the worshipping community offering something over-and-against itself:

For we do not offer God this or that thing; the new element in the Eucharist is the presence of the sacrifice of *Christ*. Therefore the sacrifice is effective where *his* word is heard, the word of the Word, by which he transformed his death into an event of meaning and of love, in order that we, through being able to take up his words for ourselves, are led onward into his love, onward into the love of the Trinity, in which he eternally hands himself over to the Father. There, where the words of the Word ring forth, and our gifts thus become his gifts, through which he gives himself, *that* is the sacrificial element that has ever and always been characteristic of the Eucharist.<sup>163</sup>

In summary, for Ratzinger the answer to the question of how the eucharistic sacrifice conveys the fruits of the Paschal Mystery is that Christ communicates these fruits by allowing the community to participate in his sacrificial prayer to the Father. When the words of Christ’s sacrificial prayer are heard in the assembly, the power of these words leads the assembly onward into his transformative and self-giving love. This is the essence of the eucharistic sacrifice.

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<sup>161</sup> *God is Near Us*, 49-50. Cited text originally published in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*. See also *ibid.*, 51: “Thus the Canon, the ‘true sacrifice,’ is the word of the Word; in it speaks the one who, as Word, is life. By putting these words into our mouths, letting us pronounce them with him, he permits us and enables us to make the offering with him: his words become our words, his worship our worship, his sacrifice our sacrifice.”

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 51. Cited text originally published in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-7. Emphasis original.

## 5.2 “Fruitfulness” as the Unitive and Transformative Power of the Eucharist

What then are the effects on worshipping individuals and communities brought about through participation in the eucharistic prayer of Jesus? What “fruit” does the celebration of the Eucharist produce in the faithful? On the individual level of one’s interior transformation, Ratzinger often talks about a kind of “ecstasis” or movement outside one’s closed individual existence in which unity with others through unity with Christ is the goal:

We all ‘eat’ the same person, not only the same thing; we all are in this way taken out of our closed individual persons and placed inside another, greater one. We all are assimilated into Christ and so, by means of communion with Christ, united among ourselves, rendered the same, sole thing in him, members of one another.<sup>164</sup>

This “eating” of Jesus that is a movement of individuals out of themselves into Christ is also referred to by Ratzinger in terms of a “eucharistic personalism” which he described as “a drive toward union, the overcoming of the barriers between God and man, between ‘I’ and ‘thou’ in the new ‘we’ of the communion of saints.”<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI*, 75-6. Cited text originally from a lecture given at the Eucharistic Congress of the Archdiocese of Benevento, Italy, June 2, 2002. See also *The Apostles*, 21: “Precisely in this way, since it is an anticipation of the future world, communion is also a gift with very real consequences. It lifts us from our loneliness, from being closed in on ourselves, and makes us sharers in the love that unites us to God and to one another.” Cited text is from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 29, 2006. See also *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 79: “Receiving the Lord in the Eucharist, accordingly, means entering into a community of existence with Christ, entering into that state in which human existence is opened up to God and which is at the same time the necessary condition for the opening up of the inner being of men for one another.” See also *God is Near Us*, 78: “When we truly communicate, this means that we are taken out of ourselves, that we are assimilated into him, that we become one with him and, through him, with the fellowship of our brethren.” Cited text originally published in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*. Finally, see *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 50: “She is most truly Church when she celebrates the Eucharist and makes present the redemptive love of Jesus Christ which frees men from loneliness and leads them to one another by leading them to God.”

<sup>165</sup> *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 87.

This overcoming of the “I” and “thou” in one eucharistic Body is analogous for Ratzinger to the image of nuptial love in which husband and wife become one flesh. In *Called to Communion* he wrote:

The Church is the Body of Christ in the way in which a woman is one body, or rather one flesh, with the man. Put in other terms, the Church is the Body, not by virtue of an identity without distinction, but rather by means of the pneumatic-real act of spousal love. Expressed in yet another way, this means that Christ and the Church are one body in the sense in which man and woman are one flesh, that is, in such a way that in their indissoluble spiritual-bodily union they nonetheless remain unconfused and unmingled.<sup>166</sup>

Hence in the Eucharist, which is an act of self-giving love, the “I” of the individual is blended or fused with the “I” of Christ into a new single spiritual existence: “This means a single spiritual existence with Him who in rising again, was made ‘spirit’ by the Holy Spirit while remaining bodily in the openness of this Spirit.”<sup>167</sup> Such a new spiritual existence is a unity created “through the unifying power of love, which does not destroy the two-ness of I and Thou but welds it into a profound oneness.”<sup>168</sup> This two-ness or difference is therefore not abolished but rather is swallowed up into a greater unity.<sup>169</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI, in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, has in several places described how the experience of God’s love in the Eucharist inevitably leads to observable changes in worshipping individuals and communities. A strong desire to witness is one expected effect from the experience of

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<sup>166</sup> *Called to Communion*, 39.

<sup>167</sup> See *Called to Communion*, 37-8: “Through the image of love between human beings the Eucharist, which is an act of love, fuses two subjects in such a way as to overcome their separation and to be made one.” See also *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 101: “Receiving the Eucharist means blending one’s existence, closely analogical, spiritually, to what happens when man and wife become one on the physical-mental-spiritual plane.”

<sup>168</sup> *The Feast of Faith*, 29.

<sup>169</sup> See *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 103.

God's love. In article eighty-four he writes, "The love that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves."<sup>170</sup> Further on he states, "The wonder we experience [from the sacred mysteries] at the gift God has made to us in Christ gives new impulse to our lives and commits us to becoming witnesses of his love."<sup>171</sup> Another fruit of the Eucharist is a desire to perform acts of charity and work for a more just and fraternal world.<sup>172</sup> Thus the "eucharistic personalism" described above should result in observable and visible changes in the worshipping communities and individuals.

These statements of Ratzinger as theologian and as pope would seem to indicate that such spiritual fruitfulness in individuals and Christian communities cannot be the product of their own initiatives but must be a fruit of an authentic eucharistic experience of the love of God. In *Principles of Catholic Theology*, he said, "Spiritual fruitfulness cannot be manufactured."<sup>173</sup> As Pope Benedict XVI, he also attributes a unique spiritual fruitfulness to the Eucharist.<sup>174</sup> The unifying power of love that is communicated in the Eucharist, therefore, has a spiritual fruitfulness that cannot be manufactured and as such is uniquely capable of changing the world.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* #84.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. #85.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. #88.

<sup>173</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 298.

<sup>174</sup> See *Sacramentum Caritatis* #80.

<sup>175</sup> Ratzinger has argued along these lines more than once. In *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 106-7, he wrote: "The eucharistic assembly becomes the point from which a universal love shines forth, overcoming all boundaries and divisions; the Eucharist is also a turning inward and upward; only from the depths within, and from the heights of what is truly above, can come the power that overcomes boundaries and divisions and changes the world." Specifically, the Eucharist is the foundation of all community building and missionary activity: "Only a power and a love that are stronger than all our own initiatives can build up a fruitful and reliable community and impart to it the impetus of a fruitful mission...the Eucharist is the foundation of community as it is of mission, day by day." See *ibid.*, 89. Finally, the Eucharist is also the true motive power for all social transformation in the world. See *God is Near Us*, 127. Text originally published as Joseph Ratzinger, "A Homily on Acts 2:42," *Ordinariats-Korrespondenz* 03-10/80, no. 26 (July 2, 1980).

Pope Benedict XVI also describes situations in which a *lack* of eucharistic “fruit” may be grounds for questioning the wholeness of an assembly’s Eucharist. He writes, “‘Worship’ itself, Eucharistic communion, includes the reality both of being loved and of loving others in turn. A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented.”<sup>176</sup> This continues the view espoused in *Principles of Catholic Theology*, where he seemed open to questioning a community’s Eucharist if that community is having trouble producing priestly vocations:

But where the Church is insufficiently able to generate priestly vocations or to inspire individuals to an undivided, even celibate, service of God’s kingdom, there cannot fail to be doubts also about her eucharistic efficacy.<sup>177</sup>

In summary, Ratzinger’s theology of “eucharistic personalism” uses the analogy of spousal love to describe the nature of the unity achieved in the celebration of the Eucharist. This unifying love experienced in the Eucharist is uniquely capable of changing the world and would appear to produce enough visible effects in a worshipping community that these fruits (or lack thereof) oftentimes serve as a measure or standard for judging the wholeness of a particular community’s eucharistic experience.

### 5.3 *Necessary Conditions for the Full Reality of the Eucharistic Mystery*

Ratzinger has clearly stated numerous times that unity among eucharistic communities is such an important condition for celebrating the Eucharist that without this unity no eucharistic reality or communion with the Lord is possible. This first condition is a logical consequence of the unity of the risen Lord himself, of whom the church is his Body:

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<sup>176</sup> *Deus Caritatis Est* #14. See also *Sacramentum Caritatis* #82.

<sup>177</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 298.

And this Lord is always one, always undivided. To receive him means to be united with all others. Where this does not take place, the door is closed to the Lord himself. Thus unity with all other communities is not just something which may or may not be added to the Eucharist at some later time; it is an inner constitutive element of the eucharistic celebration. *Being one with others is the inner foundation of the Eucharist without which it does not come into being.*<sup>178</sup>

Furthermore, “being one with others” in the celebration of the Eucharist means unity with the universal church. In *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith* he said, “The Eucharist is celebrated with the one Christ, and thus with the whole Church, or it is not celebrated at all.”<sup>179</sup> The concrete sign that a community is in unity with the whole church is communion with the bishop of Rome:

Precisely because it is the whole Christ, the undivided and indivisible Christ, who gives himself in the Eucharist, for that very reason the Eucharist can only be celebrated with the whole Church. We have Christ only if we have him together with others. Because the Eucharist is concerned only with Christ, it is a sacrament of the Church. And for the same reason it can be carried on only in unity with the whole Church and with her authority. That is why the pope belongs in the Eucharistic Prayer, in the Eucharistic celebration. *Communion with him is that communion with the whole, without which there is no communion with Christ.*<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 293. Emphasis mine. See also *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 10-11: “Christ is complete everywhere; but he is also only one everywhere, and hence I can only have the one Lord in the unity that he is himself, in the unity with others who are also his body and are continually to become his body anew in the eucharist. Hence the unity among themselves of the communities that celebrate the eucharist is not an external accessory for eucharistic ecclesiology but its inmost condition: it is only in unity that it is one.” See also *God is Near Us*, 52-3: “Wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, he is wholly and fully present; this Christ, fully present, is yet at the same time one. That is why we can only receive him together with everyone else; because he is one, we can only receive him in unity. If ever we were opposed to unity, we would be unable to meet with him. For that reason, every celebration of the Eucharist has the structure we find in the *Communicantes*, that of communion not only with the Lord but also with creation and with men of all places and all times; we cannot have communion with the Lord if we are not in communion with each other.” Originally published in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*. Pope Benedict XVI also writes in *Deus Caritatis Est* #14: “As Saint Paul says, ‘Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’ (*1 Cor* 10:17). Union with Christ is also union with all those to whom he gives himself. I cannot possess Christ just for myself; I can belong to him only in union with all those who have become, or who will become, his own. Communion draws me out of myself towards him, and thus also towards unity with all Christians.”

<sup>179</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 106.

<sup>180</sup> *God is Near Us*, 120. Emphasis mine. Cited text originally published as “Celebrating in Communion with the Pope.”

A second condition necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist is that as a sacrament the Eucharist is a gift that must be received from without and above—from the risen Christ through the mediation of the universal church:

What are the conditions of the eucharistic mystery? How does it come into being? The community cannot bestow it on itself. The Lord does not arise from the midst of the communal assembly. Rather he comes to it only from ‘without’—as one who bestows himself.<sup>181</sup>

Hence the local congregation is not the origin of the Eucharist but rather the Eucharist comes to the congregation from the whole body of Christ:

The Eucharist does not take its origins from the local Church, nor does it end there. It always means that Christ is coming to us from without, passing through our locked doors; ever and again it comes to us from without, from the whole, one body of Christ, and draws us into that body.<sup>182</sup>

Ratzinger is therefore always against any contention that argues that the Eucharist is a “right” of the local community, arguing rather for the mediatory role of the universal church in the sacramental gift of the risen Lord in the Eucharist:

Where the Eucharist is claimed as the right of the community, there quickly follows the notion that the community can confer it on itself, in which case it no longer needs a priesthood that can be bestowed only by ordination in the *successio apostolica*, that is from within the ‘Catholic’ context, the Church as a whole and her sacramental power.<sup>183</sup>

The sacramental priesthood thus serves as the concrete guarantee that the local community has genuinely received the Eucharist from the risen Lord: “The fact that the sacrament of priestly service is requisite for the Eucharist is founded upon the fact that the congregation cannot give itself the Eucharist; it has to receive it from the Lord by the

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<sup>181</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 293.

<sup>182</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 143.

<sup>183</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 287.



mediation of the one Church.”<sup>184</sup> Pope Benedict XVI reiterates: “The Church teaches that priestly ordination is the indispensable condition for the valid celebration of the Eucharist.”<sup>185</sup>

Ratzinger often described the two necessary conditions for the Eucharist, unity and genuine sacramentality, using the language of catholicity and apostolicity of the Eucharist, such that *catholicity* of the Eucharist guarantees its essential unity with the whole church and the *apostolicity* of the Eucharist guarantees the aspect of its sacramental “givenness.” The advantage of this language is that Ratzinger is able to show their interconnection. In *Principles of Catholic Theology*, he wrote, “Catholicity...is a central inner dimension of the very mystery of the Eucharist.... [It is] not to be separated from the apostolicity of the Church. The condition of the Church’s apostolicity is her Catholicity; the content of her Catholicity is her apostolicity.”<sup>186</sup> Hence, for him, only a priest ordained in the historic apostolic succession is able to serve as the concrete sacramental sign that the community is celebrating the Eucharist in the unity and catholicity of the whole church and is likewise receiving the Lord’s gift of the Eucharist in apostolic continuity with the early church rather than creating it anew for itself.

Clearly for Ratzinger an ordained priest in the apostolic succession is absolutely required in order for the assembly to constitute a real eucharistic assembly and, consequently, a “church” in the theological sense. In *Principles of Catholic Theology*, he

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<sup>184</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 143.

<sup>185</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* #23.

<sup>186</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 294.

noted that *Lumen Gentium* #26 describes how “legitimate” eucharistic assemblies are always in communion with the local bishop:

The word ‘legitimate’ places the local eucharistic assembly in the context of the apostolic succession and so of the universal Church. If the assembly lacks this inner Catholicity, it is not a ‘legitimate’ assembly, that is, *it does not exist as a real eucharistic assembly and, consequently as a ‘community.’*<sup>187</sup>

Here Ratzinger links a Christian community’s reality as a “church” with its inner possession of both catholicity and apostolicity. If it is missing these marks, it is not a real eucharistic assembly and therefore not a real church. Furthermore, Ratzinger argued that it is through its connection to the historic apostolic succession that a Christian community receives its existence as a church from the triune God through the universal church:

To celebrate the Eucharist means to enter into union with the universal Church—that is with the one Lord and his one Body; the outward sign that one cannot manipulate the Eucharist at will and that it belongs to the universal Church is the *successio apostolica*: it means that no group can constitute itself a church but *becomes* a church by being received as such by the universal Church. It also means that the Church cannot organize herself according to her own design but can become herself again and again only by the gift of the Holy Spirit requested in the name of Jesus Christ, that is through the sacrament.<sup>188</sup>

While Ratzinger here emphasized the dual conditions for genuinely celebrating the Eucharist (and thus being a “church”) as consisting of communion with the universal church and also receiving its existence as “church” from above and without, he also emphasized the importance of apostolic succession in realizing these two conditions in the eucharistic assembly. His argument is that “without the apostolic succession there is no genuine priesthood, and hence there can be no sacramental Eucharist in the proper

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 289. Emphasis mine.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 293. Emphasis original.

sense.”<sup>189</sup> While it is possible to distinguish in Ratzinger’s thinking two fundamental conditions required for constituting a eucharistic assembly as a genuine “church,” in actuality, the fulfillment of both conditions depends entirely on the community’s possession of a eucharistic ministry rooted in the historic apostolic succession. It would seem therefore that Ratzinger’s understanding of which Christian communities can be considered genuine “churches” fundamentally depends on its possession of the sacramental priesthood rooted in the historic apostolic succession.

#### 6. *The Sacrament of Order and Apostolic Succession*

In this section I shall attempt to describe Ratzinger’s understanding of how the sacrament of order serves to act as a sacramental sign and guarantee for meeting the two necessary conditions for a Christian community to be a real eucharistic assembly and hence a “church.” My discussion will touch upon the role of the episcopate and the episcopal college in preserving the communion of all eucharistic assemblies. The section will conclude with a discussion of Ratzinger’s understanding of apostolic succession and how it serves to guarantee the sacramental priesthood of the one church.

##### 6.1 *The Sacrament of Order and the Nature of the Sacramental Priesthood*

According to Pope Benedict XVI, the sacrament of order enables the priest to act in the person of Jesus Christ, thereby ensuring that the celebration of the Eucharist is truly a gift of the risen Lord and not a confection of the local community: “First of all, we need to stress once again that the connection between Holy Orders and the Eucharist is seen most clearly at Mass, when the Bishop or priest presides in the person of Christ the

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<sup>189</sup> *The Ratzinger Report*, 161.

Head.”<sup>190</sup> This aspect of the sacrament of order thus satisfies the sacramental nature of the celebration of the eucharistic mystery. Furthermore, the sacrament of order also designates the priest as a representative of the universal church, thereby joining each eucharistic assembly within the communion of the whole church. Pope Benedict XVI further stresses these points:

There is a particular need for clarity with regard to the specific functions of the priest. He alone, and no other, as the tradition of the Church attests, presides over the entire eucharistic celebration, from the initial greeting to the final blessing. In virtue of his reception of Holy Orders, he represents Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, and, in a specific way, also the Church herself.<sup>191</sup>

Hence in the reception of the sacrament of order, the priest as a representative of the universal church is enabled to satisfy the “catholic” condition of the eucharistic celebration.

If the presider of the Eucharist is not ordained to the sacramental priesthood this presider lacks the authority from the universal church to pray the eucharistic prayer in the name and person of Christ.<sup>192</sup> As Ratzinger wrote in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*:

‘This *is* my Body’...these words are the words of Jesus Christ. No man can pronounce them for himself. No one can, for his own part, declare his body to be the Body of Christ, declare this bread to be his Body, speaking in the first person, the ‘I’ of Jesus Christ. This saying in the first person—‘*my* Body’—only he himself can say.... No one can endow himself with such authority; no one else can give it to him; no congregation or community can give it to him. It can only be the gift of the Church as a whole, the one whole Church, to whom the Lord has communicated himself. *For this reason the Mass needs the person who does not speak in his own name, who does not come on his own authority, but who*

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<sup>190</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* #23.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* #53.

<sup>192</sup> In *The Ratzinger Report*, Ratzinger says: “The hallmark of the Catholic priesthood is a supernatural ‘authority of representation,’” 56.

*represents the whole Church, the Church of all places and all ages, which has passed on to him what was communicated to her.*<sup>193</sup>

In *Principles of Catholic Theology*, he further argued that the authority to celebrate the Eucharist is definitively and exclusively reserved to the sacramental priesthood:

“Jurisdiction with regard to the Eucharist and the commission to speak the holy words of the sacrament, are inseparably and exclusively linked to the priestly ministry.”<sup>194</sup>

What then is the essence of the sacrament of order? How is its reality discerned in the ordained minister? Is it only able to be recognized through juridical norms or could Ratzinger accept that the genuine presence of the sacrament may be discerned in more charismatic ways? In the remainder of this section I shall first describe Ratzinger’s understanding of the sacrament of order itself, followed by his understanding of the character or power imparted to the ordained priest through the sacrament of order.

Although the proper sacramental sign of holy orders is the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration,<sup>195</sup> nevertheless it is the Holy Spirit who confers the sacrament of order on the ordinand rather than the human consecrator.<sup>196</sup> The imposition of hands is the sacramental expression of the prayer of the church who implores the Spirit to confer priestly “power” on the ordinand. Thus, the sacrament of order is not a creation of the institutional church but is rather something that must be asked of God in prayer.<sup>197</sup> For Ratzinger, the idea that the ministerial office is something purely social or functional

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<sup>193</sup> *God is Near Us*, 53-4. Emphasis original. See also *ibid.*, 54. Both texts originally published in *Eucharistie—Mitte der Kirche*. Pope Benedict XVI writes in *Sacramentum Caritatis* #23: “No one can say ‘this is my body’ and ‘this is the cup of my blood’ except in the name and in the person of Christ, the one high priest of the new and eternal Covenant (cf. *Heb* 8-9).”

<sup>194</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 235.

<sup>195</sup> See *ibid.*, 240.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>197</sup> See *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 179.

is thus completely contrary to the Catholic understanding of priestly office as essentially sacramental and ontological.<sup>198</sup> Even the form of sacramental prayer is not a creation of the church but is something received in the tradition of the apostles. It is in receiving the sacrament from the Lord through the apostles that the church is certain that her prayer to the Holy Spirit is heard and answered.<sup>199</sup> In summary, an essential aspect of the sacrament or order consists in the church's prayer to the Holy Spirit to provide what can only be given from above. This is consistent also with what Ratzinger believes is crucial in the celebration of the Eucharist, namely that its celebrant have the power and authority to pray the eucharistic prayer in the person of Christ which can only be given and never manufactured.

The sacrament of order through the imposition of hands and consecratory prayer also has an "ecclesial" aspect to it that corresponds to the necessary condition of unity and catholicity in the eucharistic celebration:

The imposition of hands with the accompanying prayer for the Holy Spirit is not a rite that can be separated from the Church or by which one can bypass the rest of the Church and dig one's own private channel to the apostles. It is an expression of the continuity of the Church, which in the communion of the bishops is the locus of tradition, of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Catholic theology places great emphasis on the unbroken identity of the tradition of the apostles, which is firmly held in the unity of the concrete Church and is expressed in the ecclesial gesture of the imposition of hands.... The imposition of hands takes place in and lives from the Church. It is nothing without the Church—an imposition of hands that is not an entering into the existential and traditional context of the Church is not an ecclesial imposition of hands.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 154-5.

<sup>199</sup> See *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 242.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 246.

The sacramental and ecclesial dimensions present in the sacrament of order thus serve to bind together both apostolicity and catholicity in the eucharistic community.<sup>201</sup>

Ratzinger also made an interesting case for the primacy of God's call in the sacrament of order over its mediation through the institutional church:

The fact that this sole enduring structural element in the Church is a sacrament means at the same time that it is always having to be constituted by God. The Church cannot dispose of it as she wishes; it is not just there and cannot be set up or arranged by the Church out of her own resources. It comes into being only secondarily through the Church's call; primarily it is through God's call to this particular person and, thus, only charismatically and pneumatologically. It can therefore be accepted and lived out only on the basis of the way the calling is renewed, of the way the Spirit cannot be predicted or controlled.<sup>202</sup>

While Ratzinger here argues for the primacy of the Spirit in constituting the sacrament of order in order to emphasize that the church cannot dispose of or arbitrarily reform the sacrament, his reasoning about the unpredictability and freedom of the Spirit would also seem to leave open the possibility that the sacramental priesthood may be present in non-Catholic communities which are not in communion with the Catholic Church. This raises the question of what Ratzinger believes to be the nature of the "character" or "power" that the priest receives in the sacrament of order.

For Ratzinger, the nature of the character received in ordination is that of a servant. The priest forever thereafter has an existence defined in relational terms insofar as he is now a servant of Jesus Christ. The servant-relationship character of the priest is the basis of the priest's relationship to his congregation and also serves to reconcile the ontological conception of the priesthood with the functional conception of the ministry:

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<sup>201</sup> See *ibid.*, 247: "As an ecclesial sacrament, the sacrament of the imposition of hands is an expression of the traditional structure of the Church. It binds apostolicity and catholicity together in the unity of Christ and the Spirit, which is represented and completed in the eucharistic community."

<sup>202</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 179.

The concept of servant refers to a relationship. Someone is a servant in relation to someone else. If the priest is defined as being a servant of Jesus Christ, this means that his life is substantially determined in terms of a relationship: being oriented toward his Lord as a servant constitutes the essence of his office, which thus extends to his very being. He is a servant of Christ, so as to be, on the basis of Christ, for his sake and along with him, a servant of men. The fact of being oriented toward Christ is not in contradiction to his relation to the congregation (to the Church) but is the basis of that relationship and is what gives it all its depth. Being oriented toward Christ means being received into his own life as a servant and being at the service of the ‘body,’ of the Church, with him. Precisely because the priest belongs to Christ, he belongs to men in a quite radical sense. Only in this way is he able to be so profoundly and so unconditionally dedicated to them. That, in turn, means that the ontological conception of the office of priest, as something extending to the very being of the person concerned, does not stand in opposition to the seriousness of the functional concept, the ministry to others, but gives to this service a radical dimension that would be unthinkable in the merely profane sense.<sup>203</sup>

This “character” of the ordained priest as a servant who belongs to Christ is not only ontological but also sacramental. One cannot give himself or herself this character; rather it can only be received from the Lord:

We could say that ‘character’ means a belonging that is a part of the person’s very existence. To that extent the image of ‘character’ expresses in its turn the same ‘being related to,’ ‘having reference to,’ that we were just talking about. And, indeed, this is a kind of belonging we can do nothing about; the initiative for this comes from the proprietor—from Christ. I cannot simply declare myself as belonging to the Lord in this way. He must first accept me as one of his own, and then I can enter into this acceptance and accept it for my own part, learn to live it. To that extent, then, the term ‘character’ describes the nature of the service of Christ that is contained in the priesthood as having to do with our being; and at the same time it makes clear what is meant by its being sacramental.<sup>204</sup>

Finally, the nature of the priestly character as a servant of Christ allows Ratzinger to avoid interpreting the power of the priest in the consecration of the Eucharist as something other than the proper authority to pronounce the words of the eucharistic

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 162-3.



prayer, such as a physical or magical ability to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. In a 1965 article, “Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,”

Ratzinger wrote:

For the eucharist is not at all that individualistic act of consecration which the priest performs himself alone by virtue of an *accidens physicum*, i.e., of the sacramental character, without relation to others and the Church. The eucharist is by its very essence *sacramentum ecclesiae*. There is an inseparable connection between the eucharistic and the Mystical Body of the Lord. We cannot think of one without the other.<sup>205</sup>

More recently, Pope Benedict XVI writes, “The ordained minister also acts ‘in the name of the whole Church, when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the eucharistic sacrifice.’”<sup>206</sup>

## 6.2 *Episcopal Office and Episcopal Collegiality*

Ratzinger, repeating the teachings of Vatican II, says the office of bishop is where the sacrament of order finds its fullness and focus. The episcopal office is a service to unity in the local church. In *Called To Communion*, he wrote, “[The bishop] embodies the unity and public character of the local Church that derive from the unity of the Word and sacrament.”<sup>207</sup> For Ratzinger, one bishop in one place stands for the fact that the church is one for all because God is one for all.<sup>208</sup> Thus “a Church understood eucharistically is a Church constituted episcopally.”<sup>209</sup> The monarchical episcopate is an

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<sup>205</sup> “Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” 58-9.

<sup>206</sup> *Sacramentum Caritatis* #23.

<sup>207</sup> *Called to Communion*, 94.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

essential structure of the church because it guarantees the public nature of the Eucharist and prevents individuals and groups from “picking out their own private Eucharist.”<sup>210</sup>

Besides serving as a focus of unity in the local church, a bishop is also entrusted with keeping his church connected with other local churches in the communion of churches:

The bishop guarantees not only the unity of each individual community but also the unity of the individual community with the one Church of God in this world. Just as a community continues to be a community only by being so in reference to the bishop, so the bishop continues to be a bishop only by being so in reference to other bishops who, together, form a public unity, which is in turn ordered to a primacy.<sup>211</sup>

By keeping his church connected with all other churches the bishop thereby embodies both the apostolic and catholic elements of the church.<sup>212</sup>

An implication of this supra-local role of the bishop is that a bishop is not truly a bishop if he does not belong to the episcopal college: “One becomes a bishop by entering into the community of bishops; the episcopal office exists essentially always in the plural, a ‘We,’ which gives significance to the individual ‘I.’”<sup>213</sup> This necessary unity of all bishops with one another constitutes for Ratzinger the real essence of catholicity.<sup>214</sup> In addition, the structure of episcopal collegiality is rooted in the more fundamental reality

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 78-9.

<sup>211</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 253.

<sup>212</sup> *Called to Communion*, 88.

<sup>213</sup> “Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” 53. See also *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 143: “One is a bishop, not as an individual, but in belonging to a body, to a college, which for its part signifies the historical continuity of the *collegium apostolorum*.”

<sup>214</sup> See “Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” 45. See also *Introduction to Christianity*, 345: “The word ‘catholic’ expresses the episcopal structure of the Church and the necessity for the unity of all the bishops with one another.”

of the church as a communion of eucharistic communions. In *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, Ratzinger wrote:

The concept of the college of bishops presupposes the reality of communion as the Church's vital and constitutional fundamental form. A collegial structure exists in the Church because the Church lives in the communion of Churches and because this structure of communion implies bishops belonging to one another and thus forming a college.<sup>215</sup>

The concept of collegiality applies not only to the episcopal office but is a fundamental structure of the church itself.<sup>216</sup> This is entirely consistent with what I described above as Ratzinger's formulation of the 'we' structure of the church.

Finally, Ratzinger argued that since the episcopal order is primarily directed to the Eucharist, its whole content and function is, like the Eucharist itself, concerned with the unity and communion of the church. This understanding of the sacrament of order is the grounds for overturning the theological opinion made popular in the Middle Ages that denied episcopal consecration contained the fullness of the sacrament of order:

From about the 12<sup>th</sup> century on, a distinction is made in the episcopal office between the *ordo* and *jurisdictio*, i.e., between the power of ordination and the power of governing. The power of ordination is, then, particularly related to the 'true Body of Christ' in the holy eucharist in which the priest, by virtue of the *ordo*, consecrates the bread in holy mass, while the power of jurisdiction is said to be relating to 'the Mystical Body of Christ.' It should be noted that because of this view medieval theology denied that episcopal consecration was a separate degree of the sacrament of holy orders, since in the ordination of the priest the full power of eucharistic consecration was conferred, to which nothing could be added.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 56.

<sup>216</sup> "Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality," 62.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-8.

In arguing that the Eucharist is wholly concerned with the unity and collegiality of the whole church, Ratzinger, following Vatican II, turns the medieval thesis on the sacrament of order upside down:

It would seem then that the thesis that the *ordo* is related only to the *corpus eucharisticum* and has nothing to do with ‘collegiality’ will have to be turned around so as to read: if and because the *ordo* is related to the eucharist its whole function is related to *koinonia* which is the content of the eucharist and the original concept of ‘collegiality’ in one.<sup>218</sup>

Hence the episcopal office is endowed with the fullness of unity and catholicity necessary to ensure that a Christian community is a real eucharistic assembly and hence a genuine “church”—Ratzinger’s first condition for the eucharistic mystery described above. The following section will demonstrate how episcopal succession satisfies the second condition necessary for the eucharistic mystery—apostolicity—in the sense of a genuine sacramental continuity with the apostles and the risen Christ.

### 6.3 *Apostolic Succession and Tradition*

Ratzinger’s theology of apostolic succession is primarily concerned with how the experience of the risen Christ in the contemporary church is guaranteed to be the same experience of the apostolic community. It is also tightly connected with his theology of Tradition. The succession of the apostles is the sacramental form of Tradition in which this needed continuity of experience is transmitted and guaranteed. As Pope Benedict XVI, he says:

We cannot have Jesus without the reality he created and in which he communicates himself. Between the Son of God-made-flesh and his Church there is a profound, unbreakable and mysterious continuity by which Christ is present today in his people. He is always contemporaneous with us, he is always

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

contemporaneous with the Church, built on the foundation of the Apostles and alive in the succession of the Apostles.<sup>219</sup>

The Holy Spirit “actualizes” and “realizes” the experience of the Risen Christ in the spiritual life of the church throughout the centuries:

The Holy Spirit appears to us as the guarantor of the active presence of the mystery in history, the One who ensures its realization down the centuries. Thanks to the Paraclete, it will always be possible for subsequent generations to have the same experience of the Risen One that was lived by the apostolic community at the origin of the Church, since it is passed on and actualized in the faith, worship and communion of the People of God, on pilgrimage through time.<sup>220</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI writes that this “permanent actualization of the active presence of the Lord Jesus in his People, brought about by the Holy Spirit and expressed in the Church through the apostolic ministry and fraternal communion” is what is meant by “Tradition” in the theological sense:

It is not merely the material transmission of what was given at the beginning to the Apostles, but the effective presence of the Crucified and Risen Lord Jesus who accompanies and guides in the Spirit the community he has gathered together. Tradition is the communion of the faithful around their legitimate Pastors down through history, a communion that the Holy Spirit nurtures, assuring the connection between the experience of the apostolic faith, lived in the original community of the disciples, and the actual experience of Christ in his Church.<sup>221</sup>

It is noteworthy that “Tradition” for Pope Benedict XVI is the *effective* presence of the risen Christ; it is a communion *nurtured* by the Holy Spirit. The idea of the fruitfulness of the risen Christ in the Holy Spirit thus stands behind Pope Benedict XVI’s notion of Tradition.

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<sup>219</sup> *The Apostles*, 13. Cited text is from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 15, 2006.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. Cited text is from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, April 26, 2006.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 30. Cited text is from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, April 26, 2006.

Although Tradition is the permanent and continuous presence of the word and life of Jesus among his people, it is only through the living witness that the word and life of Jesus are present.<sup>222</sup> Succession in ministry is both the expression and link with Tradition in the Catholic Church. In *Principles of Catholic Theology* Ratzinger wrote, “The pneumatological rite of the imposition of hands and prayer points, in the imposition of hands, to the unbroken content of ecclesial tradition as the *situs* of the Spirit.”<sup>223</sup> In fact, even in a very early article, “Primacy, Episcopate, and Apostolic Succession” (1959), Ratzinger noted that tradition and succession were nearly identical concepts in the early church:

It is clear that *successio* and *traditio*, as first used, meant practically the same thing, and indeed were expressed by the same word *διαδοχή*, which meant both tradition and succession. ‘Tradition’ is never a simple, anonymous passing on of doctrine, but is personal, is the living word, concretely realized in the faith. And ‘succession’ is not a taking over of official powers, which then are at the disposal of their possessor, but is rather a dedication to the word, an office of bearing witness to the treasure with which one has been entrusted.<sup>224</sup>

Apostolic succession in ministry and apostolic tradition therefore define one another:

“The succession is the external form of the tradition, and tradition is the content of the succession.”<sup>225</sup>

Ratzinger also emphasized the sacramental aspect of apostolic succession.

Apostolic succession is the personal and sacramental mode of “tradition.”<sup>226</sup> It is also the sacramental form of the unifying presence of tradition<sup>227</sup> and as such, it has played a

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<sup>222</sup> See *Ibid.*, 37. Quoted text is from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, May 10, 2006.

<sup>223</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 245.

<sup>224</sup> “Primacy, Episcopate, and Apostolic Succession,” 46-7.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>226</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 295.

<sup>227</sup> *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 75.

decisive role in the continuing existence of the church through the ages.<sup>228</sup> It is a sacramental form of the continuity and unity of the faith.<sup>229</sup>

But how does a person enter into the succession of the apostles? For Ratzinger, it is not enough to arrange a purely formal imposition of hands with a bishop in the apostolic succession. He calls the ordinations of certain high-church Protestant bishops “apocryphal” for this very reason.<sup>230</sup> For Ratzinger, “Apostolic succession is not a purely formal power; it is part of the mission for the gospel. That is why the concepts of succession and tradition were not separated in the early Church....”<sup>231</sup> Unless the person ordained is also a personal witness to the tradition of the apostles, he or she has not truly entered into the succession of the apostles. In addition, one can only become a successor to the apostles by entering into communion with the episcopal college, which as a college has succeeded to the apostolic college:

[Bishops] do not succeed a certain apostle but are members of the college that takes the place of the apostolic college, and this fact makes each single one of them a successor of the apostles.... The ‘collegial’ aspect is an essential component of episcopal office and a necessary consequence of its catholic and apostolic dimensions.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *Called to Communion*, 71.

<sup>229</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 190.

<sup>230</sup> See *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 245-6: “The high-church movement in some forms of Protestantism obfuscated the Catholic concept of holy orders and the symbolism of the imposition of hands in many respects. Some of these ministries in these churches managed somehow to arrange an imposition of hands by bishops who could demonstrate a connection with the imposition of hands in the Catholic Church and were thus able to claim a formal legitimacy of apostolic succession. As a result there are a number of persons holding such ministries whose succession is apocryphal. Wherever such high church ordinations are conferred in this way, the fundamental nature of the imposition of hands has been totally misunderstood.”

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>232</sup> *Called to Communion*, 97.

Thus one becomes a successor to the apostles “by entering into the community of those in whom their office is continued.”<sup>233</sup>

The negative implication of this is that those bishops not in communion with the episcopal college having the bishop of Rome as its head, are outside of the apostolic succession. This becomes clear in Ratzinger’s description of apostolic succession in the early church. In “Primacy, Episcopate, and Apostolic Succession” he noted that most bishops succeed the apostles only indirectly:

But the majority of bishops, those not in apostolic sees, succeed only by a circuitous route, i.e., through an apostolic see. They are apostolic indirectly, not directly. They are legitimately apostolic only because they are in communion with an apostolic see.... The apostolic sees were the criterion of the true, i.e., the Catholic communion. Whoever was in communion with them was in the Catholic Church, for these sees could not, by their very nature, exist outside the Church.<sup>234</sup>

Furthermore, the apostolic see of Rome is “the final, proper, and self-sufficient criterion of Catholicity.”<sup>235</sup> Ratzinger argued that “only communion with Rome gives [other bishops] Catholicity and that fullness of apostolicity without which they would not be true bishops. Without communion with Rome one cannot be in the *Catholica*.”<sup>236</sup> Pope Benedict XVI has more recently written that apostolic succession is verified on the basis of communion with the church of Rome.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> *Church, Ecumenism and Politics*, 13.

<sup>234</sup> “Primacy, Episcopate, and Apostolic Succession,” 56-7. Emphasis mine. The apostolic sees were those churches where the apostles had once worked or which had received apostolic letters, such as the churches of Rome, Antioch, and Ephesus. *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60. Ratzinger nevertheless recognizes Rome is in a mutual relationship of dependence with the other apostolic sees. See *ibid.*, 60: “Just as the other sees need the apostolic testimony of Rome in order to be Catholic, so Rome needs their Catholic testimony, the testimony of real fullness, in order to remain true. Without the testimony of reality, Rome would negate its own meaning.”

<sup>237</sup> *The Apostles*, 40. Cited text is from Pope Benedict XVI, General Audience, May 10, 2006.



## 7. Conclusion

Given this exposition of key elements in Ratzinger's theology, especially his ecclesiology, I now return to the three questions I raised in the introduction to this chapter. First, what criteria does Ratzinger use for evaluating which Christian communities are "churches"? Second, is Ratzinger's theology consistent with his understanding of which non-Catholic communities are "churches" in the theological sense? Third, how does Ratzinger's present theology justify his change of opinion that Protestant and Anglican communities are not genuine "churches"?

I demonstrated above that Ratzinger emphasized two main criteria for demarcating a Christian community as a "church," namely that such a community have both a "sacramental" (or apostolic) dimension and a "unitive" (or catholic) dimension to its eucharistic celebration. Regarding the sacramental dimension, Ratzinger is clear that a Christian community cannot bestow the eucharistic mystery on itself or independently cause the risen Christ to become present through its own self-sufficient power of assembly. Rather a genuine "church" understands that the eucharistic mystery and hence its own character as a "church" is something that is received rather than created. It comes only from without rather than within.<sup>238</sup>

Ratzinger also argued that a genuine experience of the risen Lord in the eucharistic celebration of an authentic church can only occur if that community is celebrating the Eucharist in unity with the whole church. This is because the Lord is

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<sup>238</sup> See again, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 293: "What are the conditions of the eucharistic mystery? How does it come into being? The community cannot bestow it on itself. The Lord does not arise from the midst of the communal assembly. Rather he comes to it only from 'without'—as one who bestows himself."

always one and undivided. To receive Christ means to be united with all others. Thus unity with all other eucharistic communities is an inner constitutive element of the eucharistic celebration. As Ratzinger wrote, “Being one with others is the inner foundation of the Eucharist without which it does not come into being.”<sup>239</sup> I believe that Ratzinger’s two essential conditions for what is required to be “church,” namely sacramentality and unity, do offer important criteria for evaluating the ecclesiality of non-Catholic Christian communities. Christian communities, for example, that, for whatever reason, believe they are a self-sufficient assembly of believers or are opposed in principle to unity with other Christian communities need not be considered “churches” in the theological sense.

Nevertheless, Ratzinger’s ecclesiology oftentimes fails to take account of how the Spirit may be working in complex historical situations. When discussing the two essential conditions of the eucharistic mystery, allowance is rarely made for degrees of catholicity or apostolicity. The reality under discussion is either present or absent. For example, in the interview on Luther and the unity of the churches, Ratzinger argued that the application of the term “church” to Lutheran churches does not take on the same signification as it does with the Catholic Church because the Lutheran churches took shape due to historical accident, assuming the form as its political milieu, while the Catholic Church has a structure that has been instituted as such by the Lord and cannot be changed. Ratzinger appeared to be applying his “sacramental” or apostolic criterion to the Lutheran churches. Nevertheless, the way in which he applied it to the concrete

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

situation of the Lutheran churches in Germany lacks nuance. He failed to consider the possibility that the Spirit may have a hand in forming new institutional structures using elements from the surrounding political environment or at least be able to work effectively through them. Nor does he acknowledge the historical complexities and contingencies, aptly described by theologians such as Francis Sullivan and Kenan Osborne, in his own assertion that the episcopal structure of the church was “instituted as such by the Lord and cannot be changed.”<sup>240</sup>

This lack of nuance sometimes raises the question of how consistent Ratzinger’s ecclesiology is with his understanding of non-Catholic ecclesiality. This is most prominent in his contention that communion with the bishop of Rome is so essential to the celebration of the Eucharist that without such communion there is no communion with Christ.<sup>241</sup> Such a statement is seemingly so absolute that it is difficult to understand how he holds this position while simultaneously believing the separated Eastern churches (which are not in full communion with the church of Rome) have preserved the authentic and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery. Nor is it easy to understand how such a position is compatible with his positive statements about the saving presence of the Lord

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<sup>240</sup> See Kenan Osborne, *Orders and Ministry: Leadership in the World Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006): 116: “In spite of the common view that the function and identity of both bishops and priests have been unchanging over many centuries, historical research indicates that over the last two thousand years there have been major changes in the roles of both bishops and priests.” See also Francis Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops*, 15-16: “One conclusion seems obvious: Neither the New Testament nor early Christian history offers support for a notion of apostolic succession as ‘an unbroken line of episcopal ordination from Christ through the apostles down through the centuries to the bishops of today.’”

<sup>241</sup> See *God is Near Us*, 120: “Communion with [the Pope] is that communion with the whole [church], without which there is no communion with Christ.” Cited text originally published as “Celebrating in Communion with the Pope.”

in the Protestant Eucharist.<sup>242</sup> Indeed, if it were really true that full communion with the bishop of Rome is required for a Christian community to have communion with the risen Christ, would it not imply that only local Catholic churches could be considered authentic “churches” and that outside the Catholic Church there is only “non-church”?

Furthermore, how does one explain Ratzinger’s change of opinion regarding whether Protestant and Anglican communities are “churches” in the theological sense? It is clear that Ratzinger has always held that the Protestant break with Rome created a fundamentally new form of community.<sup>243</sup> It is also clear that Ratzinger very early in his career insisted that Protestants and Catholics hold to different understandings ministerial office and apostolic succession.<sup>244</sup> Yet, despite these early and constant theological opinions, I have shown how the early Ratzinger, believing that he was following the teaching of Vatican II, argued that Protestant and Anglican communities should nevertheless be called “churches” while the later Ratzinger argues they should not. While the early Ratzinger believed non-Catholic communities that have a self-awareness of being the church should be called “churches” (insofar as the Catholic Church did not create the proper and legitimate space within the one church for a proper plurality of churches), the later Ratzinger argues that these communities “are structures which came about due to historical chance” and should not, therefore, be considered as “churches” in

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<sup>242</sup> See *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 248: “One of the most important results of ecumenical conversations is the realization that the questions of the Eucharist cannot be restricted to the problem of ‘validity.’ Even a theology along the lines of the concept of succession, as is in force in the Catholic and Orthodox Church, should in no way deny the saving presence of the Lord in the Evangelical Lord’s Supper.” See also *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 236: “Catholic teaching here recalled to memory does not in any way deny that Protestant Christians who believe in the presence of the Lord also share in that presence.”

<sup>243</sup> See, for example, *Theological Highlights*, 75.

<sup>244</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, “The Ministerial Office and the Unity of the Church,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 1 (1964): 42-57. Originally published as “Das geistliche Amt und die Einheit der Kirche,” *Catholica* 17 (1963): 165-79.

the theological sense.<sup>245</sup> While the early Ratzinger suggested that the Catholic Church could recognize in the Augsburg Confession the catholicity of a particular form of the common faith with its own independence (and thereby recognize the Augsburg Confession churches as legitimate “churches”), the later Ratzinger now argues that Vatican II sought to indicate that these communities are not authentic “churches,” due to their divergent understanding of “church.”<sup>246</sup> Regrettably, I can only raise the question as to why Ratzinger’s opinion changed; I cannot answer it. Yet theologically, it seems reasonable to suggest that Ratzinger’s thinking on this matter might have changed during his time as prefect of the CDF. If, as prefect of the CDF, he embraced the idea suggested in the CDF’s notification to Leonardo Boff that “outside the Catholic Church only elements of church exist,” then clearly he would be forced to reevaluate his understanding of Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality.<sup>247</sup>

Finally, an overarching concern of this chapter is whether Ratzinger’s own ecclesiology provides any support for evaluating the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches” despite the later Ratzinger’s refusal to designate them as such. My study of Ratzinger so far leads me to believe there are aspects of Ratzinger’s theology that could justify calling these communities “churches” on the basis of their “ecclesial fruitfulness.” In the section on Ratzinger’s trinitarian foundations for ecclesiology I showed how he described the being of God as fundamentally relational, in which the Person of the Holy Spirit is the *fruitfulness* of love and unity between the

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<sup>245</sup> See *Theological Highlights*, 74, versus Geyer, “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” 113.

<sup>246</sup> See “The Future of Ecumenism,” 204, versus Geyer, “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” 113.

<sup>247</sup> See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), “Notification to Father Leonardo Boff,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 77 (1985): 758-59.

Father and the Son. His concept of the fruitfulness of God has the potential to provide a foundation for an understanding of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.”

The idea of God as fundamentally “fruitful” carries over both into Ratzinger’s pneumatology and Christology. As he points out in *The Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, “The fundamental activity of the Holy Spirit is the love that unites and draws into abiding unity.”<sup>248</sup> Furthermore, as I have shown, Ratzinger’s understanding of the Paschal Mystery is itself intimately connected with the idea of the risen and crucified Lord becoming fruitful in the loving gift of himself in death. Here Ratzinger follows the lead of Henri de Lubac and describes this fruitful movement of God in the person and work of Christ, through the activity of the Holy Spirit, as the redemption and fulfillment of all humanity.<sup>249</sup> In Ratzinger’s thought, the goal and destiny of all humanity is the union of the human race and the mending of the shattered image of God. It is through the experience of the risen and crucified Lord, present in the eucharistic celebration through the Holy Spirit, that the fruitfulness of God’s overflowing love is mediated to all of humanity. Is it not worth considering whether Christian communities that live in the reality of an abiding unity in love indeed share in the fruitfulness of God, who is the Holy Spirit, and in thus doing so make present the church? As Irenaeus said, “For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church and every kind of grace.”<sup>250</sup> This line of thought will be explored in further detail in Chapter Five.

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<sup>248</sup> *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 45.

<sup>249</sup> *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 49.

<sup>250</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* (3.24.1). Cited in Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, March 28, 2007.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE NATURE OF ECCLESIALITY ACCORDING TO WALTER KASPER

## 1. *Introduction and Outline of Methodology*

Walter Kasper was born March 5, 1933 in Heidenheim, a town of the Swabian forest, not far from Tübingen, Germany.<sup>1</sup> He started his theological studies at the University of Tübingen in 1952 and later worked there as a Professor of Dogmatics in the Catholic faculty of theology. Other than a short time (1964-1970) in Münster, Kasper remained at Tübingen until his appointment as Bishop of Rottenburg-Stuttgart in 1989. In 1999, Pope John Paul II appointed him as Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. In February 2001, Kasper was appointed to the College of Cardinals. He served as the President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity from 2001 to 2010.

Kasper, like Joseph Ratzinger, believes that the subject of ecclesiology, the church, is subordinate to and directed towards the aim of all faith, namely God:

Questions regarding the Church are closely connected with, but obviously subordinate to questions regarding the existence and nature of God. It is clear that the church is not the most important thing. The aim of faith is God alone and communion with him. The church itself is not God and may under no circumstances be deified.<sup>2</sup>

Yet there is clearly a difference between the systematic method of Kasper's and Ratzinger's theology in general and their ecclesiologies in particular.<sup>3</sup> This is evident from two notable exchanges Kasper and Ratzinger have had over the course of their careers. The first began in 1969. In a critical review of Ratzinger's work *Introduction to*

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<sup>1</sup> See Aidan O'Boyle, *Towards a Contemporary Wisdom Christology: Some Catholic Christologies in German, English and French 1965-1995* (Rome: Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 2003): 216.

<sup>2</sup> Walter Kasper, "Church as Communio," *New Blackfriars* 74 (1993): 235. See also Ratzinger and Peter Sewald, *Salt of the Earth*, 65-6.

<sup>3</sup> My contrast between the thought of Ratzinger and Kasper agrees with that of Thomas P. Rausch, *Pope Benedict XVI: An Introduction to His Theological Vision* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009).



*Christianity*, Kasper called attention to the “latent idealism” in Ratzinger’s work, noting that Ratzinger’s starting point was the dialectic between the visible and the invisible.<sup>4</sup> Kasper put forward his own starting point for systematic theology, namely the embodied situation of humans in nature, society, culture and history.

A second controversy occurred over thirty years later over Ratzinger’s claim that the universal church is ontologically prior to the local church. Similar to the first dispute between them, Kasper argued that Ratzinger’s position is essentially Platonic, starting from the primacy of the idea, while his own is more Aristotelian, which sees the universal as existing in the concrete reality.<sup>5</sup> In Kasper’s work, *Leadership in the Church* (2003), Kasper accused Ratzinger of ignoring concrete pastoral concerns and experiences while taking an overly theoretical and abstract perspective on the relationship between the universal church and the local churches.<sup>6</sup> Kasper instead argued for a more historical approach:

One cannot clarify the relationship between the universal church and the local church by means of abstractions and deductions alone. The church is an historical reality; it is the church’s history, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, that provides the exegesis of what it is. Every answer to our question must therefore do justice to the concrete history of the church, which of course is highly complex.<sup>7</sup>

In the conclusion to Chapter Three, I argued that Ratzinger often fails to adequately account for the complexities of the concrete situation of the divided churches when

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<sup>4</sup> Rausch, *Pope Benedict XVI*, 44.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Kasper, “The Universal Church and the Local Church: A Friendly Rejoinder,” in *Leadership in the Church: How Traditional Roles can Serve the Christian Community Today*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad, 2003): 162. Originally published as “Das Verhältnis von Universalkirche und Ortikirche: Freundschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit der Kritik von Joseph Kardinal Ratzinger,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 219 (December 2000): 795-804.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 163.

considering the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. In this chapter, I hope to determine whether or not Kasper's more historically based theological method leads to a greater recognition of the ecclesiality of these communities.

## 2. *Walter Kasper on the Ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican Communities*

In this chapter, I shall first explore Kasper's explicit statements on Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality, Eucharist and ministry throughout his career as professor, bishop and curial official. Unlike Ratzinger, who early in his career claimed that the Catholic Church recognized Protestant and Anglican communities as "churches" but came to affirm the opposite later in his career, Kasper has remained more consistent. His position maintains that the Catholic Church recognizes Protestant and Anglican communities as "churches," albeit analogously and not strictly according to the Catholic self-understanding of "church" in the theological sense of the word.

### 2.1 *Subsistit and the Implications for Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality*

Kasper, like Ratzinger, has frequently argued that the Catholic Church maintains a unique self-understanding of the church, a self-understanding that was conveyed by the Second Vatican Council's statement that the church of Christ subsists in the Catholic Church. Kasper suggests that this fundamental difference between the Catholic and Protestant ecclesial self-understanding is most acutely evident when asking the question about where the church is fully realized. In his most recent book, *Harvesting the Fruits* (2009), he wrote:

Behind the many still unresolved individual questions can be identified one fundamental problem and one fundamental divergence in the understanding of the Church. This becomes clear when we not only ask: What is the Church? but also: Where is the Church and where is she realised in her fullness? While Protestants

answer this question with the response that the Church is realized in communities in which the Word of God is correctly preached and the sacraments are duly administered (CA VII), Catholics answer that the Church of Christ subsists in (*subsistit in*) the Catholic Church, i.e., the Church concretely, fully, permanently and effectively realised in communion with the successor of Peter and the bishops in communion with him (LG 8; UR 4).<sup>8</sup>

According to Kasper, outside the Catholic Church there is church reality, but there is not *the* church in the proper or full sense. Non-Catholic ecclesiality is “church” in an analogous and imperfect way.<sup>9</sup> In this regard, Kasper in essence agrees with Ratzinger who also emphasizes that the term *subsistit* implies that there is real “ecclesial being” (though not the true church) outside the one true “subsistence” of the church of Christ in the Catholic Church.<sup>10</sup>

Kasper often has emphasized that one purpose of the term *subsistit* is to make it clear that the Holy Spirit operates outside of the Catholic Church in non-Catholic

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<sup>8</sup> Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London: Continuum, 2009): 153. In 2004 he described *subsistit* in these terms: “The controversial question arises only when one asks where this Church of Jesus Christ is present, where it can concretely be found. To this question the Catholic Church responds with her famous ‘*subsistit in*’ and affirms that the Church of Jesus Christ subsists in the Roman Catholic Church (*Lumen gentium* 8). Or, as the declaration *Dominus Iesus* puts it in a much sharper way, the Church of Jesus Christ in the full sense subsists *only* in the Catholic Church.” See Walter Kasper, *That They May All Be One: The Call to Unity Today* (London and New York: Burns & Oates, 2004): 41. See also Christian Geyer, “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” *Inside the Vatican* (January 2001): 113.

<sup>9</sup> See *That They May All Be One*, 42. Commenting on *Dominus Iesus*, Kasper wrote: “The statement in *Dominus Iesus* goes beyond the Council’s words and says that the Church of Jesus Christ’s is ‘fully’ realized ‘only’ in the Catholic Church.... In reality, it provides a hint for an appropriate answer. Logically and conclusively, it means that, although there is no full realization of the Church of Jesus Christ outside the Catholic Church, there still is an imperfect realization. Therefore there is no ecclesial vacuum outside the Catholic Church (UUS 13). There may not be ‘the’ Church, but there is a church reality.” See *That They May All Be One*, 66. See also Walter Kasper, “Ecumenical Perspectives on the Future: One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 181-2: “Naturally, the council maintains that the Catholic Church is the true church, the church that has remained faithful to the apostolic inheritance. But it also teaches that ecclesial reality (not ‘the church’ as such) exists outside the Catholic Church.” Originally published as “Ein Herr, ein Glaube, eine Taufe: Ökumenische Perspektiven für die Zukunft,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 220 (February 2002): 75-89.

<sup>10</sup> See “Ratzinger on *Dominus Iesus*,” 114. However, unlike Ratzinger, Kasper does not believe the term *subsistit* should be interpreted using the scholastic concept of subsistence. See *That They May All Be One*, 65.

communities and churches and uses them as means of salvation for their members. For example, in *That They May All Be One* (2004), he wrote, “Both the Second Vatican Council and the encyclical [*Ut Unum Sint*] acknowledge explicitly that the Holy Spirit is operating in the other churches and church communities.... Consequently, there is no idea of an arrogant claim to a monopoly on salvation.”<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere he wrote, “Both the Council and the ecumenical Encyclical [*Ut Unum Sint*] acknowledge explicitly that the Holy Spirit is at work in the other Churches in which they even discover examples of holiness up to martyrdom.”<sup>12</sup> These churches and ecclesial communities, though not in full communion with the Catholic Church:

...rightly belong to the one church and possess salvatory significance for their members (*LG*, 8, 15; *UR*, 3; *UUS*, 10-14).... The question of the salvation of non-Catholics is now no longer answered personally as in *Mystici corporis* on the basis of the subjective desire of single individuals, but institutionally on the basis of objective ecclesiology.<sup>13</sup>

I hope to show below that Kasper’s emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling Protestant and Anglican communities to be communities of salvation could provide a theological rationale for designating them as “churches” in the theological sense. His position on this matter also has potential to contribute to this dissertation’s theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness.” Before I can argue this, however, it is necessary to describe how

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<sup>11</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 16. Kasper also writes: “The council goes so far as to state that the Holy Spirit makes use of these churches and ecclesial communities as instruments whereby their members can be saved.” See “Ecumenical Perspectives on the Future,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 182.

<sup>12</sup> See Cardinal Walter Kasper, “Current Problems in Ecumenical Theology,” *Ephrem’s Theological Journal*, VII (2/2003): 107-128. Accessed online at <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20030227\\_ecumenical-theology\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20030227_ecumenical-theology_en.html)>

<sup>13</sup> See Cardinal Walter Kasper, “The Decree on Ecumenism—Read Anew After Forty Years.” Opening address of Cardinal Kasper at the Symposium on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Unitatis redintegratio*, November 11-13, 2004, Section #3. Accessed online at <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20041111\\_kasper-ecumenism\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20041111_kasper-ecumenism_en.html)>.

Kasper's understanding of Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality compares with his understanding of the ecclesiality of the non-Catholic eastern churches.

## 2.2 *Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality Compared to Eastern Ecclesiality*

Kasper, like Ratzinger, repeatedly affirms the fact that the Eastern churches are authentic "churches," even though they are not in full communion with the bishop of Rome.<sup>14</sup> The fundamental reason, in Kasper's view, for their recognition as "churches" is that they have a fully valid Eucharist insofar as they have preserved the original and total reality of the eucharistic mystery.<sup>15</sup> Yet he mentions additional reasons for the Catholic recognition of the separated eastern churches as authentic "churches," namely, several shared "ecclesial elements" that contribute towards the recognition of these communities as sister churches:

Dialogue with the Orthodox Churches of Byzantine, Syrian and Slavic tradition officially began in 1980. With these Churches we have the first millennium dogmas in common, the Eucharist and the other sacraments, the veneration of Mary, the Mother of God, and the Saints, the episcopal structure of the Church. We consider these Churches together with the ancient Eastern Churches as Sister Churches of the local Catholic Churches.<sup>16</sup>

In *Leadership in the Church*, Kasper further argued that Catholics and the Orthodox share the same fundamental understanding of the church: "We share the creeds of the early

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<sup>14</sup> See for example, *That They May All Be One*, 41: "The Orthodox churches are recognized as true particular churches...." See also *ibid.*, 65-66. See also Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* #15.

<sup>15</sup> "Here we must also distinguish between the Eastern churches, which have preserved a fully valid Eucharist and which we therefore acknowledge as churches in the full sense (UR #15), and those ecclesial communities which have not preserved the original and total reality of the eucharistic mystery (UR #22)." See Walter Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity: The Eucharist and the Church*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroads, 2004): 143-4. Originally published as *Sakrament der Einheit. Eucharistie und Kirche* (Freiburg, Basle, Vienna: Herder Verlag, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Cardinal Walter Kasper, "Meeting of the Holy Father with the College of Cardinals at the Vigil of the Public Ordinary Consistory." Address given by Cardinal Walter Kasper on November 23, 2007. Accessed online at <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20071123\\_dialogo-ecumenico\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20071123_dialogo-ecumenico_en.html)>.

church, the same sacraments (especially the Eucharist), and the same episcopal church constitution.”<sup>17</sup>

Kasper also mentioned another important factor that contributes to the traditional Catholic recognition of the separated eastern churches, namely that these churches do not owe their origin to the Latin church. In *That They May All Be One*, he noted that the separated eastern churches owe their origin to the apostles or their coworkers rather than the Latin church:

[*Lumen Gentium*] expressly mentions ‘ancient patriarchal churches’ which have arisen ‘through divine providence’. They owe their origin either to the apostles themselves or to immediate collaborators of the apostles; in the course of time they have joined together into an organically united communion.<sup>18</sup>

Because of their special origin these churches have their own unique “ecclesial being” which makes the Latin church their sister and not their mother:

The Eastern churches have their own manner of being a church. They have not received their ecclesial being from the Latin church; on the contrary, the Latin Church owes much to them. The Latin church is therefore not the mother but the sister of the Oriental churches, the relationship between two churches is not a dependent mother-daughter relationship, but a fraternal communion (UR 14).<sup>19</sup>

It is striking that Kasper considers the separated eastern churches to be authentic particular “churches” in part because they have their own unique “manner of being a church.” As I shall show below, one reason Kasper, like Ratzinger, does not affirm that Protestant and Anglican communities are “churches” in the theological sense is that they do not want to be “church” in the same manner as the Catholic Church.

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<sup>17</sup> “Ecumenical Perspectives on the Future,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 192.

<sup>18</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 77.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

How then does Kasper understand the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities in comparison to the churches of the East? Kasper has spent much effort explaining the CDF's statement in *Dominus Iesus* that "the churches of the Reformation are not churches in the proper sense of the word." In a negative sense, he has offered only one primary reason why Protestant and Anglican communities are not true "churches," namely, that these communities have not preserved the complete reality of the eucharistic mystery: "The ecclesial communities which emerged from the Reformation have—as the Council says— 'not preserved the original and complete reality (*substantia*) of the mystery of the eucharist' (*Unitatis Redintegratio* #22) because of the absence of the sacrament of orders."<sup>20</sup> Kasper further argued that "this lack of eucharistic substance results in the distinction between churches and ecclesial communities. The declaration *Dominus Iesus* (16) added conceptual sharpness to this distinction, and this has often been the subject of harsh criticism on the part of Protestant Christians."<sup>21</sup>

Kasper thus affirmed the idea that a community requires a valid episcopate in order to have the complete reality of the eucharistic mystery. In *That They Might All Be One*, he wrote, "Because the Reformers did not maintain the church ministry, especially the apostolic succession in the episcopacy, the Catholic Church considers the communities issuing from the Reformation to be ecclesial communities but not churches in the proper sense (UR 19-23, esp. 22; *Dominus Iesus*, 17; cf, below)."<sup>22</sup> Later in the

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<sup>20</sup> "The Decree on Ecumenism—Read Anew After Forty Years," Section #5.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 63.

same work Kasper argued that a valid episcopate is definitive for recognition as a “church.” Commenting on the CDF’s 2000 document “Note on the Expression ‘Sister Churches,’” he wrote:

The Congregation determined that the concept ‘sister church’ can only be applied to the relationship of churches with a valid episcopate, and is thus not applicable to the ecclesial communities of the Reformation. This amounts to an indirect affirmation that a valid eucharist is definitive for recognition as a church and thereby also as a sister church.<sup>23</sup>

However, Kasper, unlike Ratzinger, *did* emphasize a positive aspect to the CDF’s statement that Protestant and Anglican communities “are not churches in the proper sense.” He argued that these communities are “churches,” just not churches in the “Catholic sense.” What this means for Kasper is that these communities are a “different type of church”<sup>24</sup> insofar as they have a different self-understanding of what it means to be “church.”<sup>25</sup> In *Leadership of the Church*, he wrote:

But *Dominus Iesus* does not in fact deny that these bodies are ‘churches.’ It says only that they are not churches in the sense in which the Catholic Church understands itself to be a ‘church,’ and this is surely undeniable! In terms of their own ecclesiology, they have no desire whatever to be a church like the Catholic Church. They are a different type of ‘church.’ They do not possess the Episcopal ministry in the historic succession, nor the Petrine ministry; but for us Catholics, both these elements are essential.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 81.

<sup>24</sup> See “The Decree on Ecumenism—Read Anew After Forty Years,” Section #5: “While in the case of the split with the Eastern church the fundamental ecclesial structure which had developed since the second century remained intact, in the case of the churches which emerged from the Reformation we are dealing with a different type of church.”

<sup>25</sup> “The Protestants do not wish to be considered as Church in the same way as the Catholic Church sees itself,” *That They May All Be One*, 2. Further on he wrote: “However, informed people are aware that the Protestant communities do not want to be ‘Church’ in the same way as the Catholic Church understands itself,” *ibid.*, 15-6. See also “The Decree on Ecumenism—Read Anew After Forty Years,” Section #5.

<sup>26</sup> “Ecumenical Perspectives on the Future,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 194-5.



Thus Protestant and Anglican communities are “churches,” but churches in an improper, analogous sense in comparison with the self-understanding of the Catholic Church.<sup>27</sup>

Kasper argued that while the Catholic understanding of “church” is grounded in the Eucharist, the Reformers’ understanding of “church” is grounded on the Word of God. For the Reformers, the church is a *creatura verbi* (creature of the word):

But in Lutheran and Reformed theology the Church is generally understood as based on the proclamation of the word rather than on the sacraments, and defined as *creatura verbi* (*De captivitate Babylonica*: WA 6,551). This excludes an ecclesiology which understands the Church to be constituted ‘from below,’ by an association of its members. According to Reformation understanding the Church is where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel (CA VII; *Apol.* 7).<sup>28</sup>

For the Reformers, the church becomes real in the worshipping community of the local congregation: “The Reformation understanding of the Church has its basis and centre of gravity in the congregation. The worshipping assembly of the local congregation is the

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<sup>27</sup> “Consequently, *Dominus Iesus* does not say that the ecclesial communities which issued from the Reformation are not churches; it only maintains that they are not churches in the proper sense; which means, positively, that in an improper sense, analogous to the Catholic Church, they are church. Indeed, they have a different understanding of the Church; they do not want to be church in the Catholic sense,” *That They May All Be One*, 66.

<sup>28</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 61-62. On page 22 Kasper wrote: “In the reformatory sense, the Church is ‘*creatura verbi*’; she is understood primarily through the proclamation of the Word and the response of faith; she is the assembly of believers, in which the Gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.” See also Kasper, “The Decree on Ecumenism—Read Anew After Forty Years,” Section #5: “Regardless of the differences between the Reformers—often considerable—their understanding of the church is grounded not on the eucharist but primarily on the Word of God as *creatura verbi*.” In an early article he wrote: “The 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformers did not want to found a new church. The Augsburg Confession clearly shows that they sought rather to renew the existing church on the basis of the Gospel. And yet the Reformers came to see the church in a new light: The church is *creatura Verbi* and the sacraments are visible words. The church comes to be defined as the place where the Gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments conferred in accord with that Gospel.” See Walter Kasper, “Dialog with Reformation Churches,” *Theology Digest* 30 (1982): 214. Originally published as Walter Kasper, “Lo stato del dialogo ecumenico fra Chiesa cattolica e Chiese della Riforma,” *Asprenas* 29, no. 1 (Jan. 1982): 3-12.

visible realization and manifestation of the Church'; it lacks nothing of what is constitutive for the Church."<sup>29</sup>

While Kasper argued that the Protestant understanding of "church" as a *creatura verbi* is fundamentally different than the Catholic understanding of "church" as a sacrament of grace, he also earlier suggested that these two different self-understandings may be complementary rather than contradictory. For example, in 1987, Kasper argued that the Second Vatican Council itself incorporated aspects of this Protestant understanding of the church into its own self-understanding:

The council talks about word and sacrament (*Ad gentes* 9; *Apostolicam actuositatem* 6; *presbyterorum ordinis* 4; *Unitatis redintegratio* 2), or about the two tables, the table of the eucharist and the table of the word (*Sacrosanctum concilium* 51; *Dei verbum* 21). With this phraseology, the council, in the spirit of earlier tradition, has taken up an essentially Protestant concern, and has in its own way defined the church as *creatura verbi* – 'creature of the word' (*Lumen gentium* 2, 9; *Dei verbum* 21-26). Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Letter *Evangelii nuntiandi* (1975) developed and considerably deepened this viewpoint.<sup>30</sup>

Most recently, in *Harvesting the Fruits* (2009), Kasper argues that major ecumenical dialogues with Protestant and Anglican communities have overcome the opposition and conflict between these two self-understandings of "church":

The Reformed-Catholic dialogue in its document *Towards a Common Understanding of the Church* (1990) after a lengthy treatment and discussion (Ref II, 95-111) affirmed the compatibility and complementarity of the two concepts of the Church, namely 'creatura verbi,' more identified with the Reformed, and 'sacramentum gratiae,' more identified with the Catholic understanding of the Church. Now in fact they can be seen as 'expressing the same instrumental reality under different aspects, as complementary to each other or as two sides of

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<sup>29</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 62.

<sup>30</sup> Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Crossroad, 1989): 154-155. Originally published as *Theologie und Kirche* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1987).

the same coin. They can become the poles of a creative tension between our churches' (Ref II, 113; cf. Ref III, 190).<sup>31</sup>

Kasper maintains that the use of sacramental language in reference to the church and the compatibility and complementarity of this sacramental language with the understanding of the church as a *creatura verbi* in key ecumenical dialogues with Protestants and Anglicans is an important ecumenical breakthrough that could have far-reaching consequences for further dialogues.<sup>32</sup> Kasper even describes these two models of the church as necessary for an adequate understanding of ecclesiology:

The dialogues...have shown the willingness of the participants to speak of the role of the Church as an 'effective sign of the Kingdom of God,' and even as an 'instrument' and, in some cases, as a 'sacrament of salvation.' This has to be acknowledged as an important step towards a common understanding of the Church. *The two models of the Church—creatura verbi and sacramentum gratiae—often in the past seen as in conflict or tension, are not only complementary but are both necessary for an adequate understanding of the Church.*<sup>33</sup>

Kasper concludes his work by suggesting that ecumenical dialogue has overcome the idea that Catholic Church and the Protestant communities have fundamentally different understandings of church: "The old stereotype that the Catholic Church is the 'Church of the sacraments' as opposed to the Protestant communities as 'Churches of the Word' has been overcome. All parties are convinced about the intimate connection between Word and Sacrament."<sup>34</sup> It would seem that such an ecumenical achievement undercuts a major argument of both Kasper and Ratzinger when they hold that Protestant and

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<sup>31</sup> *Harvesting the Fruits*, 69.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-50. Emphasis mine.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 190.

Anglican communities are not “churches” in the theological sense because of a fundamentally different self-understanding of “church.”

### 2.3 *Positive Recognition of Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality*

Besides this rapprochement of the Protestant and Catholic understandings of “church” as *creatura verbi* and *sacramentum gratiae*, Kasper also has recognized several other positive aspects of Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality and ministry. He noted that the starting point for recognizing a real but imperfect communion with non-Catholic churches and fellowships is the sacrament of baptism: “In virtue of our common Baptism, there already exists today a fundamental, though imperfect unity [between the Catholic Church and non-Catholic churches and communities].”<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, Kasper wrote that the Second Vatican Council not only recognized the validity of non-Catholic baptism, but also the fruitfulness of non-Catholic baptism as the basis for seeing an ecclesial quality in non-Catholic churches and communities:

The council...recognized not only the validity, but also the fruitfulness, of baptism in non-Catholics (LG 15): ‘For...many who [do not however profess the Catholic faith in its entirety]...believe in...Christ...’ and ‘are sealed by baptism...’ The Spirit of God makes use also of the non-Catholic churches as a means of salvation (UR 3; cf. 22). Thus, for Vatican II, baptism is the foundation for recognizing an ecclesial quality in the non-Catholic churches and church fellowships; it is the basis for the Catholic church's seeing itself as being in ‘a real but not full’ fellowship with the non-Catholic churches and church communities.<sup>36</sup>

This description of the fruitfulness of baptism is highly significant for two reasons. First, it establishes baptismal “fruitfulness” as the basis for recognizing the ecclesial reality of a Christian community. One implication that could be drawn from this fact is that if the

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<sup>35</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 60.

<sup>36</sup> Walter Kasper, “Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism,” *The Ecumenical Review* (52 (4/2000): 532.

fruitfulness of baptism is the foundation for recognizing a community's ecclesial character (rather than just its validity), then the fruitfulness of a community's Eucharist (as opposed to its validity) should be the primary standard by which we discern whether a particular Christian community warrants being considered a "church" in the theological sense.<sup>37</sup> The second reason this statement of Kasper's is significant is that the fruitfulness of baptism is described in terms of the Spirit of God making use of non-Catholic communities as a means of salvation. Thus baptismal fruitfulness is connected with the work of the Spirit of God in bringing about God's salvation in a community. The implications of Kasper's statement on the fruitfulness of baptism will be further developed in Chapter Five.

Kasper underscores that the Catholic Church shares other important aspects of the faith with Protestant and Anglican communities besides a common baptism. In a 1982 article, "Dialog with Reformation Churches," he described the extent of the common foundation shared between the traditions:

The foremost result of ecumenical dialog has been to discover an already existing unity: one baptism, a common Old and New Testament, a common confession of the ancient church's faith in Christ and Trinity. Though 16<sup>th</sup>-century wounds went deep, they did not penetrate to the foundation itself—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all—because this foundation was laid not by human hands, but by God.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> This does not in itself resolve the theological problem of how the Catholic Church should evaluate the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities that show evidence of being fruitful despite not having retained the integral and genuine reality of the eucharistic mystery because of a *defectus ordinis*. But such a theological shift in the Catholic understanding of "church" may offer new possibilities for the eventual recognition of these communities as "churches" in the theological sense.

<sup>38</sup> Kasper, "Dialog with Reformation Churches," 213.

Nearly thirty years later, after many decades of ecumenical dialogue with Protestant and Anglican communities, Kasper reiterated and expanded the degree of communion that he believes is shared between the Catholic Church and these Christian communities:

With joy and gratitude we can state that the reports of the four bilateral dialogues indicate a fundamental common understanding of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, common creedal faith, shared fundamental convictions about the Holy Trinity, and the salvific action of the persons of the Trinity—the core, the foundation, and the ultimate goal of Christian faith. There is also consensus on Jesus Christ, God’s incarnate Son, our Lord and Saviour. *What we share in faith is therefore much more than what divides us.*<sup>39</sup>

Given this positive assessment, it appears odd that the Catholic Church, even though it shares with Protestant and Anglican communities “the core, the foundation, and the ultimate goal of Christian faith,” nevertheless officially continues to consider these communities to be so fundamentally different that they do not merit the designation of “church.” Given the fact that what is shared in faith *is much more* than what divides the churches, that what is shared in faith are the fundamental truths of the Christian faith (“the core, the foundation, and the ultimate goal of Christian faith”), it is perplexing why Kasper does not suggest that communities that live from and believe in the most fundamental aspects of the Christian faith merit the designation of “church” in the theological sense. Could it also be that for Kasper, issues connected with the ordained ministry, particularly apostolic succession in the episcopal office, remain the fundamental problem?

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<sup>39</sup> *Harvesting the Fruits*, 27-8. Emphasis mine. The four bilateral dialogues Kasper refers to are: the International Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity (1967-present); the International Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1970-present); the International Dialogue between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church (1970-present); and the International Commission for Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council (1967-present).

## 2.4 *The Defectus Ordinis in Protestant and Anglican Ministry*

Although Kasper has carefully followed Catholic tradition in speaking of a *defectus ordinis* in separated ecclesial communities (UR 22), he has also acknowledged that a certain level of recognition of Protestant and Anglican ministry is warranted. In “Church Authority by Ecumenical Consensus?” (1973), he wrote:

Despite its insistence upon the Protestant lack of genuine ordination and hence of valid Eucharist, Vatican II in the same decree on ecumenism asserts that ecclesial communities other than our own are true ‘means of salvation’ for their members. And these communities perform this salvific service concretely through their officials’ preaching *and* sacramental ministry.<sup>40</sup>

Hence, Protestant ministries are “fruitful” insofar as they perform a salvific service for their members. In 1990, Kasper interpreted this *defectus ordinis* to mean that ecclesial communities possess a real but imperfect ministry: “There [exist] elements of the true ministry in these bodies. Hence both the vocabulary of the council and the logic of the matter show that *defectus ordinis* does not mean a total lack, but a defect in the full form of the ministry.”<sup>41</sup> Finally, in *Harvesting the Fruits*, he says, “To the degree that

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<sup>40</sup> Walter Kasper, “Church Authority by Ecumenical Consensus?” *Theology Digest* 22 (1974): 5. Emphasis original. Originally published as Walter Kasper, “Ökumenischer Konsens über das kirchliche Amt?” *Stimmen der Zeit* 191 (1973): 219-30. Seventeen years later, Kasper wrote, “Thanks to these elements [of the church], the Spirit of God uses the non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities as instruments of salvation for their members. Since these bodies are active above all through their ministries, this statement implies a judgment on the ministries of non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities.” See Walter Kasper, “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 136. Originally published as “Die apostolische Sukzession als ökumenisches Problem,” in *Lehrverurteilungen—kirchentrennend?: III Materialien zur Lehre von den Sakramenten und vom kirchlichen Amt*, ed. Wolfhart Pannenberg (Freiberg i.B.: Herder, 1990): 329-49.

<sup>41</sup> “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 136. Kasper also notes that grammar alone cannot decide the important question of whether the word *defectus* in UR #22 should be translated as “absence” or partial “lack.” See *ibid.* In later works, Kasper translates *defectus* as “lack” (*That They May All Be One*, 66) or as “das Fehlen” (“The Decree on Ecumenism—Read Anew After Forty Years,” Section #5, original German). Neither term grammatically requires a strict interpretation of “total absence.” Furthermore, in *Harvesting the Fruits*, Kasper suggests that recent ecumenical recognition of genuine elements of ministry in ecclesial communities implies that the translation of *defectus* in UR #22 remains an important question. See *Harvesting the Fruits*, 156, note 27.

elements of the Church are present in the ecclesial communities, there can also be identified...elements of ministry.”<sup>42</sup>

Concerning the nature of the “defect” in the sacramental orders of Protestant and Anglican communities, Kasper is clear that what is missing (*das Fehlen*) in Protestant and Anglican ministry is sacramental and institutional rather than existential or moral in nature:

The reality and fullness of what is Catholic does not refer to subjective holiness but to the sacramental and institutional means of salvation, the sacraments and ministries (UR 3; UUS 86). Only in this sacramental and institutional respect can the Council find a lack (*defectus*) in the ecclesial communities of the Reformation (UR 22). Both Catholic fullness and the *defectus* of the others are therefore sacramental and institutional, and not existential or even moral in nature; they are on the level of signs and instruments of grace, not on the level of the *res*, the grace of salvation itself.<sup>43</sup>

On the institutional level, he has argued that the *defectus ordinis* is related to the Protestant and Anglican interruption of apostolic succession in episcopal office.

However, “the primary break [in apostolic succession] was not caused by an interruption of the chain of succession, but by a new understanding of the relationship between the church and the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ.”<sup>44</sup> Hence, it is this relationship of the gospel to the church that constitutes, for Kasper, the core underlying issue behind the judgment of Vatican II that Protestant and Anglican ministry have a *defectus ordinis*.

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<sup>42</sup> *Harvesting the Fruits*, 156, note 27.

<sup>43</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 66.

<sup>44</sup> “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 130-1. Further on he wrote: “The council does not define this defect; ...it is surely not only the interruption of the apostolic succession in the episcopal office, since this may not be seen in isolation; ultimately, this break in community was the fruit of a different understanding of the church and of the connection between Gospel and church.” Ibid., 136-7.



This divergent understanding of the relationship of the gospel to the church, Kasper argued, had its roots in the Reformers personal experience of the church:

Their starting point in the divergence they experienced between the original Gospel and the *de facto* state of the church led them to emphasize the freedom and superiority of the Gospel vis-à-vis the *de facto* church. This ‘polarity’ between Gospel and church encouraged them to trust that the Gospel itself would prevail in the Power of the Holy Spirit and that it would be heard: this does not require any link to particular offices or persons.<sup>45</sup>

Though the Reformers only appointed their own ministers after it became clear that no bishops were willing to do so, nevertheless they were “convinced that apostolicity was an attribute of the church as a whole, which consequently had the right to appoint its own office-bearers.”<sup>46</sup> Kasper argued that the Reformer’s justification for doing so makes it difficult to believe that they only viewed such ordinations as an interim emergency solution. Rather this justification contributed to a unique understanding of apostolic succession, namely that apostolic succession is a *successio* in the gospel itself. Such an idea dismantles the inherent connection between *traditio* and *successio*, between the gospel and the concrete church (which was essential for the early church), not only in individual cases but in principle.<sup>47</sup>

Kasper considers this understanding of the relationship of the gospel to the church as a key ecumenical issue for which a satisfactory solution remains elusive:

When we consider all those points where agreement already exists or may soon be achieved, it becomes clear that the core of the remaining divergence between the separated churches remains the question of the relationship between the Gospel

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 129-30.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 129-30.

and the church—not the question of the validity of ordinations by non-episcopal ministers.<sup>48</sup>

He noted that although the Second Vatican Council affirms that the magisterium is not above the Word, but at its service, nevertheless:

It does not speak of a polarity between the Gospel and the church in such a way that Scripture would exercise a critical function vis-à-vis the church and tradition. On the contrary, the council...emphasizes the inherent unity and interrelation between tradition, Scripture, and magisterium.<sup>49</sup>

Likewise, in “The Current Ecumenical Transition” (2006), Kasper said, “The fundamental problem is the relationship between God’s word and the church, and in this context the relationship between Scripture and tradition and between Scripture and teaching office.”<sup>50</sup>

In summary, the Reformation view of apostolic succession concerns more than just the question of office but rather “the total sacramental view of the church, i.e., the question as to whether the church’s visible elements are sacraments and signs of its spiritual essence, which can be perceived only in faith.”<sup>51</sup> For Kasper, the validity of ordinations by non-episcopal ministers is not the real issue behind Vatican II’s statement that ecclesial communities have a *defectus ordinis*. The real question is whether and to what extent the concrete church is the location, sign, and instrument of the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Walter Kasper, “The Current Ecumenical Transition,” *Origins* 36 (2006): 410. See also *Theology and Church*, 112. German published as “Ökumene im Wandel. Einführung in die Vollversammlung des Päpstlichen Einheitsrates am 13. November 2006,” in *Stimmen der Zeit* 132 (2007): 3-18.

<sup>51</sup> “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 130.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 137-8.

## 2.5 Recognition of Protestant and Anglican Ecclesiality and Ministry

Throughout his career Kasper has made two notable suggestions for achieving a greater recognition of Protestant and Anglican ministry and ecclesiality. Much like Ratzinger, he advocated several years ago for the possibility of an official Catholic recognition of the Augsburg Confession (CA) as providing a model for recognizing Protestant communities as genuine “churches.”<sup>53</sup> Kasper, citing several works arguing for a Catholic interpretation of the CA, wrote in 1977, “The fundamental Lutheran confession need not be the basis for the separation of the churches; it could also bring about their unity!”<sup>54</sup> Such an official recognition of the CA does not mean that the Catholic Church would take the CA confession as its own but merely understands the CA as *one* legitimate expression of the common catholic faith.<sup>55</sup> Using confessional recognition as a model for unity would mean that the partners, while remaining different, mutually understand each other without reservation as legitimate churches of Jesus Christ:

They can celebrate the Eucharist with one another, and the ministers of both churches can also carry out their functions in both churches. The churches, while retaining their independence, would thereby constitute member churches of the one church of Jesus Christ, whose unity, however, according to this model, takes on no structural form.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> See Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 202.

<sup>54</sup> Walter Kasper, “What Would Catholic Recognition of the *Confessio Augustana* Mean?” 123. In *The Role of the Augsburg Confession: Catholic and Lutheran Views*, eds. Joseph A. Burgess et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980): 123-129. Originally published as “Was bedeutet das: Katholische Anerkennung der *Confessio Augustana*?” in *Katholische Anerkennung des Augsburgischen Bekenntnisses? Ein Vorstoß zur Einheit zwischen katholischer und lutherischer Kirche*, eds. Harding Meyer, Heinz Schutte and Hans-Joachim Mund (Frankfurt am Main: O. Lembeck, 1977): 151-6.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-125.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

It is interesting that in 1977 Kasper suggested that confessional recognition could lead to full recognition as a church without having any structural form to that unity. Presumably this means that full recognition as a “church” could be achieved despite structural differences in ordained ministry. This idea was explicitly suggested early on by Kasper in *The Plurality of Ministries* (1972). There he argued that the church is made present not only as the universal church but also as the local eucharistic community of believers:

This means that the question of the recognition of office should be explored at the level of the local churches, in which there may be completely different structures of office. The unity of the universal Church is to be found in the community of the local churches and in mutual recognition of their offices. This approach to the problem of office from the level of the local churches should be a very fruitful one.<sup>57</sup>

Such an approach to the recognition of office is precisely what I shall advocate in recognizing a community as a “church” based on its ecclesial fruitfulness. Moving the recognition of ecclesiality away from validity in office toward criteria centered more on the ecclesial vitality of the local community could prove to be helpful in arguing for the recognition of Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches.” Kasper also suggested here that traditional standards of episcopal validity are insufficient to adequately recognize the full ecclesiality of a Christian community:

If this is the right course to follow, *we can no longer accept the criteria of validity which were applied in the past to Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican orders as the only ones*. These can only serve now as signs to help us to recognize where and in what way the Spirit is active in the different churches. *They are signs of life, not life itself. We have also to take other signs into account and treat them as equally important*. Ultimately, what we have to do is to use spiritual judgment and to

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<sup>57</sup> Walter Kasper, “Convergence and Divergence in the Question of Office,” in *The Plurality of Ministries*, Concilium 74, eds. Hans Küng and Walter Kasper (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972): 116.

differentiate between spirits. The new situation requires us to study the whole question of office in the churches in the wider theological context of Christ, the Spirit and the Church.<sup>58</sup>

In this statement, Kasper validates a key argument of this dissertation by suggesting that the criteria of valid orders and Eucharist can no longer be the only criteria in judging the ecclesiality of a Christian community. Such criteria are only the signs of life or signs of the ecclesial vitality of a Christian community, not life itself. Other, more adequate, criteria must be developed which use a wider and deeper theological context for judging Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality. Such signs could be, as Kasper suggests here, equally important for recognizing genuine ecclesiality.

### 3. *The Theological Foundations for Kasper's Understanding of Church*

There are aspects of Kasper's theology that have great potential for offering a foundation to discern "other signs" which would justify genuine ecclesiality in Protestant and Anglican communities. The remainder of this chapter seeks to demonstrate that Kasper makes unique contributions to this project, particularly in the areas of theology, soteriology, revelation and creation, while also sharing much in common with Ratzinger's trinitarian theology. This section describes how these foundational aspects of Kasper's theology shape his understanding of "church" and also contribute to this dissertation's theology of "ecclesial fruitfulness" that will be fully developed in Chapter Five.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Emphasis mine.

### 3.1 *The Being of God within a Trinitarian Theology*

Kasper's theology of God is similar to Ratzinger's understanding of the fruitfulness of God as described in Chapter Three.<sup>59</sup> It is an attempt to creatively synthesize the ancient philosophical understanding of God as absolute being with a more modern and biblical view of God as absolute freedom.<sup>60</sup> For Kasper, the God of the Bible "is, as absolute all-determining freedom, a dialogic God who addresses humanity in absolute freedom and invites it into communion with himself."<sup>61</sup> Kasper has pursued this theology of God for at least thirty-five years. In his work *Jesus the Christ* (1974), he credited Hegel for achieving a reconciliation between two philosophical views of God, one that conceives of God in terms of absolute freedom and another which views God as the absolute substance:

It was a stroke of genius on Hegel's part to have reconciled these two modern ways of thinking. For him the absolute is not substance, but subject, which exists however only by emptying itself to what is other than itself. 'The true is the whole. But the whole is only Essence completing itself through its development. It must be said of the absolute that it is essentially result, that only at the end is it what it truly is'.<sup>62</sup>

Hegel's understanding of the absolute as essence completing itself through development, as essentially result, is consistent with Kasper's interpretation in his later work, *The God of Jesus Christ* (1982), of the revelation of the name of God in Exodus 3.14:

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<sup>59</sup> See Chapter Three, pages 181-82.

<sup>60</sup> See Walter Kasper, "The Timeliness of Speaking of God: Freedom and Communion as Basic Concepts of Theology," *Worship* 83 (4/2009): 302.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 304.

<sup>62</sup> Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (London: Burns & Oates, 1977; New York: Paulist Press, 1976): 182. Originally published as *Jesus der Christus* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald-Verlag, 1974). Kasper also wrote: "The definition of God as a person both includes and goes beyond the classical definition of God's essence. It no longer looks at God in terms of substance and therefore does not define him as absolute substance, but thinks of him rather in the horizon of freedom and defines him as perfect freedom." Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Crossroad, 1984): 154-5. Originally published as *Der Gott Jesu Christi* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald-Verlag, 1982).

According to the Hebrew text, God reveals himself to Moses as ‘I am there who am there.’ The Hebrew verb *hayah*, used here, which we usually translate as ‘to be,’ means basically ‘to effect, be effective’. This passage of revelation, then, is not concerned with God’s mere existence or with God as absolute Being. God’s statement is a promise, a pledge that he is there, i.e., is with his people in an active, effective way.<sup>63</sup>

Kasper thus argued that both philosophically and biblically the essence of God is best understood in terms of movement, effectiveness and result.

This understanding of the essence of God, as existing only through emptying itself in another, is very similar to Ratzinger’s understanding of the fruitfulness of God described in Chapter Three. Much like Ratzinger, Kasper’s understanding of God as absolute subjective freedom implies both the personality and relationality of God. In Kasper’s opinion, such a view is also closer to the Johannine understanding of God as love:

This definition of God as essentially person has the advantage that is more concrete and alive than the abstract metaphysical definition adopted by the tradition. It is also closer to the biblical picture of God as Father. This is especially so because personality necessarily says relationality.... To call God a person is to say that God is the subsistent being which is freedom in love. Thus the definition of God’s essence brings us back to the biblical statement: ‘God is love’ (I John 4.8, 16).<sup>64</sup>

This interpretation of the Johannine statement “God is love” as absolute freedom in love is foundational for Kasper’s understanding of the Trinity. In fact, he has consistently argued that the Trinity can only be made comprehensible on the basis of the nature of love. In his earlier work *Jesus the Christ*, Kasper claimed that it is characteristic of love to find itself in the other, in emptying itself. He cited Hegel who said, “Love is a

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<sup>63</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 148.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

distinguishing of two who, absolutely speaking, are not distinct.”<sup>65</sup> For Kasper, this understanding of love as an intimate duality in which unity is achieved without the dissolution of individual identity is key to understanding the Trinitarian nature of God and is derived from the theological development of the Johannine testimony that “God is love.” In *Theology and Church* (1987), Kasper wrote, “Everything...which Christian theology and the Christian creed have to say about God, his personal nature, and the threeness of his person, are no more than the unfolding—founded on revelation itself—of that single statement in the First Epistle of John: God is love.”<sup>66</sup> And most recently (2009), he has described the nature of love in terms of an overflowing intimate duality:

Love wants to be one with the other without dissolving into the other. Love does not absorb the other; it means being one while maintaining its own identity as well as the identity of the other and finding its ultimate fulfillment. Love means being one while acknowledging the otherness of the other. But it does not stop at intimate duality but instead progresses beyond its own boundaries into a shared third entity in which it represents and fully realizes itself.<sup>67</sup>

This overflowing intimate duality of love is similar to Ratzinger’s description of the Holy Spirit as the fruitful and overflowing love between Father and Son in the Trinity.<sup>68</sup>

As with Ratzinger, the unity of God for Kasper does not mean that God is a solitary, mono-personal God. Rather, Kasper consistently describes God’s unity in terms of an overflowing fullness of self-giving love and communication. In *Jesus the Christ*

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<sup>65</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 182.

<sup>66</sup> *Theology and Church*, 31. See also *Jesus the Christ*, 183: “The inner-divine Trinity is...nothing other than the consistent exposition of the proposition ‘God is love’ (1 Jn 4.8, 16).” See also Walter Kasper, *Transcending All Understanding: The Meaning of Christian Faith Today*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989): 98: “On closer inspection the trinitarian confession is nothing other than the theological, even if stammering, paraphrase of the words in the First Letter of John: ‘God is love’ (1 Jn 4:8, 16).” Originally published as *Was alles Erkennen übersteigt: Besinnung auf den christlichen Glauben* (Freiburg: Herder, 1987).

<sup>67</sup> Kasper, “The Timeliness of Speaking of God,” 306-7. See also *The God of Jesus Christ*, 196.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 28.



Kasper stated, “God’s being God must then be conceived as freedom in love which is aware of itself in lavishing itself.”<sup>69</sup> In *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper argued that it is only because God’s essential being is overflowing love that God’s love for the world may be conceived of as gratuitous rather than necessary or out of need.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, in his work *Transcending All Understanding* (1987), Kasper wrote, “God’s unity is a fullness, and indeed an excess, of selfless giving and bestowal, of loving self-outpouring; it is a unity that includes rather than excludes a living, loving being-with and being-for.”<sup>71</sup> From eternity God “is love who gives himself without measure, love in which the Father communicates to the Son and Father and Son are in communion in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>72</sup>

The overflow of God’s love within God’s very being and this gratuitous gift of God’s love to the world is intimately connected with the Spirit of God. For Kasper, it is in the Spirit, who is in person the surplus and effusion of freedom in the love between Father and Son,<sup>73</sup> that God’s innermost essence is mediated into the world:

This surplus and effusion of freedom in the love between Father and Son is the Spirit—at least if we follow the Greek theology of the Trinity. As this ‘extreme’ in God, he is at the same time God’s innermost essence, as one must say in the tradition of Latin theology of the Trinity. In the Spirit, God’s innermost essence, his freedom in love, impels him outwards. In him, as a love that is utterly free, God at the same time has the possibility of producing something outside, that is, a creature, and while maintaining its intrinsic creaturely independence, to draw it into his love. The Spirit is, as it were, the theological transcendental condition of the very possibility of a free self-communication of God in history. In him, God

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<sup>69</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 183.

<sup>70</sup> See *The God of Jesus Christ*, 295-6. See also *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>71</sup> *Transcending All Understanding*, 100. See also *The God of Jesus Christ*, 307.

<sup>72</sup> Walter Kasper, “The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ,” in *The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ: In Dialogue with the Religions*, ed. Massimo Serretti (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 2004): 15. Originally published as “The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ,” *St. Augustin Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2000): 31-38.

<sup>73</sup> “According to Augustine, then, the Holy Spirit expresses in a personal manner the giftness of love of the Father and the Son; he is in his very person the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son.” See *The God of Jesus Christ*, 226.

cannot only reveal but carry into effect his freedom in love in an historical manner. The Spirit as mediation between Father and Son is at the same time the mediation of God into history.<sup>74</sup>

Likewise, Kasper's later work, *The God of Jesus Christ* (1982), refers to the Spirit as the "ecstasy of God," who is God as overflowing love and pure abundance, and who as such is the internal presupposition for God communicating God's self to the world.<sup>75</sup> In summary then, the Spirit is the innermost essence of God—God as pure, abundant and overflowing love, and as such is also the condition and possibility of God self-communicating this ecstatic love in history.

### 3.2 *Love as the Ultimate Meaning of Creation*

Kasper's theology of God informs and interprets his theology of creation, which in turn informs and interprets his understanding of God's purpose for the church. The Spirit, as divine love in person, is the source of creation because creation is "the outflow of God's love and a participation in God's being."<sup>76</sup> In *Transcending All Understanding*, Kasper argued that the Trinity serves as a model for the Christian understanding of reality—one that significantly breaks with classical western philosophical tradition:

The trinitarian community/unity appears as a model for the Christian understanding of reality. The teaching on the Trinity signifies a breakthrough from an understanding of reality that was stamped by the primacy of a substance

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<sup>74</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 250. See also *ibid.*, 258.

<sup>75</sup> "The Spirit thus expresses the innermost nature of God—God as self-communicating love—in such a way that this innermost reality proves at the same time to be the outermost, that is, the possibility and reality of God's being outside of himself. *The Spirit is as it were the ecstasy of God; he is God as pure abundance, God as the overflow of love and grace.* On the one hand, then, the immanent love of God reaches its goal in the Spirit. But at the same time, because in the Holy Spirit the Father and Son as it were understand and realize themselves as love, the love of God in the Spirit also moves beyond God himself. This loving streaming-out-beyond occurs not in the form of a necessary streaming-out but in the personal manner of voluntary sharing and free, gracious self-communication. In the Spirit God has as it were the possibility of being himself by emptying or divesting himself. In the Holy Spirit God is eternally givable." See *The God of Jesus Christ*, 226. Emphasis added. See also *ibid.*, 308.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

that existed in and for itself to an understanding of reality that is marked by the primacy of person and relation.... It could also be said that the meaning of being, from the Christian point of view, is love.<sup>77</sup>

Kasper more than once described this transition from the primacy of substance to the primacy of person and relation as “a revolution in the understanding of being.” In *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper noted how such an ontology of love turns upside down Aristotle’s philosophy of being:

When we define God, the reality that determines everything, as personal we are also defining being as a whole as personal. This entails a revolution in the understanding of being. The ultimate and highest reality is not substance but relation. For Aristotle, relation belongs among the accidents which are added to substance; he even regards it as the weakest of all entitles. But when God reveals himself as the God of the Covenant and of dialogue, the God whose name means being-for-us and being-with-us, then relation takes priority over substance. For then the free turning of God to the world and to us grounds all intra-worldly substantiality. The meaning of being is therefore to be found not in substance that exists in itself, but in self-communicating love.<sup>78</sup>

This understanding of the foundation and origin of all created reality has implications for its ultimate purpose. In *Faith and the Future* (1978), Kasper argued that as the world originates in love, so also is the world ordered towards fulfillment in love. Thus reality is to be understood in terms of movement and transformation. Reality is understood not as “something static, something unalterably given and unchangeable, but as history and process, as transformation through the power of love.”<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, since the world and all reality are moving towards their fulfillment in love, this implies

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<sup>77</sup> *Transcending All Understanding*, 98-9.

<sup>78</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 156. See also *Theology and Church*, 29-30. See also Kasper, “The Timeliness of Speaking of God,” 309.

<sup>79</sup> Walter Kasper, *Faith and the Future* (New York: Crossroad, 1982): 100. Originally published as *Zukunft aus dem Glauben* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1978). See also *Transcending All Understanding*, 98: “But if the highest, all-embracing and all-determining being that we call God is love, then all of reality is determined by love and oriented to love; then love is the meaning of all reality.”

that all that happens in love will endure forever.<sup>80</sup> In *Transcending All Understanding* (1987), Kasper wrote, “Everything that happens in love and out of love becomes permanent. Everything else disappears, but love remains forever (see 1 Cor 13:8). Therefore the fruits of love will also have permanence.”<sup>81</sup> Each act of love is, for Kasper, an anticipatory realization of the reign of God: “Wherever, then, love ‘occurs’, there too the definitive meaning of all reality is realized in an anticipatory way and there too the reign of God has come, even if only in a fragmentary and provisional manner.”<sup>82</sup>

### 3.3 *Salvation and Redemption as the Revelation of the Mystery of God’s Love*

Kasper’s theology of revelation focuses on God’s plan of salvation for the world as *mysterion* or mystery. In *Jesus the Christ*, he wrote:

The eschatologically founded universality of salvation of Jesus Christ is most comprehensively expounded with the aid of the term *mysterion*. In Scripture ‘mystery’ means, not primarily a conceptual mystery, but—corresponding to the apocalyptic linguistic usage—God’s eternal decree of salvation, unfathomable for man, which will be made manifest at the end of the world.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, God’s mystery is not something unknowable or abstruse. It means rather “that transcendent, salvific divine reality which reveals itself in a visible way.”<sup>84</sup>

For Kasper, it is the Word of God that makes known and reveals the *mysterion* of God. Yet, as he noted in *Theology and Church*, the Word of God is not just content about God’s salvation or a set of religious doctrines. Rather God’s Word is both fruitful and effective:

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<sup>80</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 100-1.

<sup>81</sup> *Transcending All Understanding*, 99.

<sup>82</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 156-7.

<sup>83</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 187.

<sup>84</sup> *Theology and Church*, 117-8.

The word of God does not merely interpret already existent reality. It is a *creative* word, which brings, gives, effects and confers what it utters. It is not merely a word *about* grace, life and salvation. It is an efficacious and creative word *of* grace, life and salvation. So the word of God is not a supernatural doctrine. It is itself life, spirit and power.<sup>85</sup>

According to the Hebrew notion of “word” (*dabar*), God’s Word is efficacious and always issues both in word and act.<sup>86</sup> Hence, not only has Kasper developed a theology of the Spirit as the overflowing, abundant love of God, but he also has argued that the Word of God is effective and fruitful in conferring what it utters.

Kasper further emphasized the biblical understanding of the Word of God is an event. It is neither self-evident nor deducible:

The logos the Bible talks about is the *logos tou theou*, the word of God, which is of its very nature *not* shared by all human beings, but is totally undeducible and non-contingent, and is authoritatively proclaimed by quite particular messengers—the prophets whom God calls.... That is to say, God’s word does not articulate the manifest character of the divine which appears everywhere and at all times, as do both the myth and the logos in their different ways. On the contrary, in God’s word this revelation takes place—becomes event—in a way never otherwise given.<sup>87</sup>

The Word of God is therefore by nature inaccessible to human reason: “The innermost nature of the divine mystery cannot be known ‘from below.’ It must reveal itself and communicate itself ‘from above.’”<sup>88</sup> One possible implication of Kasper’s theology of revelation as an “undeducible event” is that the presence of the event of God’s Word in a

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 23. Emphasis original. Kasper underscored further that this revelation of God is not primarily a revelation *about* something but rather the actual personal self-communication of God to human beings: “For in the self-revelation of his mystery, God does not reveal something, not even something of himself and about himself. Here, rather, he becomes manifest in that which he is: as the mystery of love. So God does not reveal something, in the sense of some supra-rational and supra-natural truths and realities: he reveals himself. According to the Christian understanding, revelation is the self-revelation of God, in the sense of God’s personal communication of himself to human beings.” See *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 22-3.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 24.

Christian community could serve as a sign of its genuine ecclesiality. If, as has Kasper described, the Word of God is only given “from above” in a way quite distinct from a general manifestation of the divine, then where the presence of the Word is discerned in a local Christian community, the genuine ecclesiality of such a community should also be recognized. The discernable presence of the Word of God in a Christian community could thus be considered an “ecclesial fruit” which, along with others, could testify to the community’s reality as an authentic “church.”

What the Word of God reveals according to Kasper is that the revelation of the Word of God “is a sign of the uncontingent freedom, graciousness, mercy and inexplicable love of God, the God who out of pure goodness turns towards human beings and reveals to them his mystery, which is the mystery of his love.”<sup>89</sup> The Word reveals God as the ultimate mystery of freedom in love. “God is love” is for Kasper “the biblical phrase which sums up the nature and content of Christian revelation, and the nature and content of the mystery uttered in that revelation.”<sup>90</sup>

In another sense, the revelation of God’s mystery is the revelation of the mystery of our salvation. Kasper wrote that the mystery of our salvation “is *the* fundamental and central saving truth of the Christian faith, whose central utterance is that God the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, has in the Holy Spirit finally pledged and communicated himself to us.”<sup>91</sup> He likewise argued that for Paul, “the mystery or secret is God’s eternal resolve to save (Eph. 1.9; 3.9; Col. 1.26; Rom.16.25), the resolve which in the fullness of

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. Emphasis original.

time he consummated in Jesus Christ so as ‘to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth’ (Eph. 1.10; Rom. 16.25f).”<sup>92</sup>

How then does God become manifest as the mystery of love? In *Jesus the Christ*, Kasper described how Jesus was in the power of the Spirit a mold and receptacle for God’s self-communication. Christ is God’s love, the meaning of all reality, in person.<sup>93</sup> Likewise, in *Theology and Church*, Kasper argued that God’s self-revelation as the mystery of love becomes tangible in history through the person, work and message of Jesus Christ:

In [Jesus Christ] is manifested, in eschatological finality in the midst of time, what from all eternity God is: relation, self-giving love between Father and Son, into which human beings through the Spirit are destined from eternity to be accepted, and which is their true bliss.<sup>94</sup>

While Jesus preached the coming of God’s reign, Kasper maintained that Jesus so completely dedicated himself to his mission that he became totally identified with it. Therefore Jesus embodies God’s loving reign, God’s self-communicating love in person.<sup>95</sup> In his essay “Priestly Office” (1997), Kasper further insisted that the reality of Jesus Christ’s person, his work and his message are inseparable. Here, he borrows a term from Origen, saying that Jesus is “the *autobasileia*, the God who has drawn near to us, God’s self-communication in person.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>93</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 267.

<sup>94</sup> *Theology and Church*, 105.

<sup>95</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 252. See also *ibid.*, 230. See also *The God of Jesus Christ*, 171: “The indirect christology of the earthly Jesus is thus a personal summation of his message about the coming reign of God as the reign of love. He is this reign of God in his very person.”

<sup>96</sup> Walter Kasper, “Priestly Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 51. Originally published as “Der priesterlicher Dienst: Repräsentation Jesu Christi als Haupt der Kirche,” in *Nicht Herren eures Glaubens, sondern Diener eurer Freude: Gedanken zum priestlichen Dienst anlässlich des 40jährigen*

In explaining how God's loving reign, embodied in the person of Jesus Christ, is communicated to human beings, Kasper, much like Ratzinger, stated that it is through death and resurrection that the risen Christ in the Spirit becomes fruitful:

In the death and resurrection of Christ, therefore, that which constitutes man's deepest nature reaches its unique and supreme realization: love surpassing itself and emptying itself. Jesus himself universalizes this basic law: 'Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it' (Mk 8.35). 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life' (Jn 12.24f). These sayings now acquire what amounts to ontological relevance.... The living reality must go out of itself in order to preserve itself. The 'I' must empty itself at a 'thou' in order to gain itself and the other.... So love, which constitutes the innermost centre of Jesus' existence, is the bond that holds all things together and gives meaning to everything.<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, it is through Christ's obedience even unto death that the Spirit is liberated in order to become "the medium and the force in which Jesus Christ as the new Lord of the world is accessible to us...."<sup>98</sup> Further on Kasper wrote:

In this all-consuming dedication to the point of death, the Spirit as it were becomes free; he is released from his particular historical figure, and consequently Jesus' death and resurrection mediate the coming of the Spirit (cf Jn 16.7; 20.22). And thus Jesus Christ, who in the Spirit is in person the mediator between God and man, becomes in the Spirit the universal mediator of salvation.<sup>99</sup>

The salvation of human beings is therefore, participation in the life of God in the Holy Spirit through the mediation of Jesus Christ.<sup>100</sup> In *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper said, "The salvation brought to us by the Son of God consists in our becoming sons and

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*Priesterjubiläums am 6. April 1997* (Rottenburg: Bischöflichen Ordinariat der Diözese Rottenburg-Stuttgart, 1997): 16-32.

<sup>97</sup> *Jesus the Christ* 190-1. See also, Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 47.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>100</sup> Kasper writes about how Jesus is the salvation of the world: "[Jesus] is filled with the Holy Spirit and we share in this plenitude in the Spirit. Salvation is therefore participation through the Holy Spirit in the life of God revealed in Jesus Christ," *Jesus the Christ*, 253.



daughters of God in the Holy Spirit; that is, the self-communication of God, which belongs by nature to the eternal Son of God, is given to us through grace in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>101</sup> While God effects the salvation of the world through Jesus Christ, God communicates this salvation in the one Spirit through the manifold gifts that the Spirit bestows on human beings.<sup>102</sup>

Such an economy of salvation mediated through Christ in the Spirit raises the important question of whether it is possible to recognize certain signs of the Spirit communicating God’s mystery of salvation to human beings. For Kasper, the discernment of the Spirit’s action in bringing salvation to individuals, religious communities and even whole societies is recognized by the fruits they produce:

Everywhere, therefore, where men take upon themselves the risk of their existence, recognize the obligation to seek for truth and with evident seriousness accept responsibility, especially, however, where they abandon self and open themselves in love to God and their neighbor, the Spirit of God is at work. Wherever this happens in the religions and cultures of mankind, God’s salvation is bestowed on men through them.<sup>103</sup>

Kasper argued in *Faith and the Future* that the Spirit of God is at work everywhere that people open themselves up in sacrificial love and accept the mystery of their existence:

The Spirit of God is at work wherever someone breaks out of the prison of egoism and devotes himself or herself to other people; wherever someone leaves everything behind, forgets and forgives, wherever someone, on the basis of the ultimate depths of trust, ventures on the future or in silent resignation accepts his or her fate and confides himself or herself to an ultimate meaning and mystery.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ* 275.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>103</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 266-7.

<sup>104</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 17. See also *Ibid.*, 61: “[The Spirit] is at work everywhere in the world and in its history where men and women hunger and thirst after righteousness, where they break through the shell of egoism and commit themselves to God and their neighbor.” See also *Ibid.*, 67.

The Spirit's work of converting people from a life of egoism to a life of loving one's neighbor in term of Christian freedom and liberation is fundamentally communal. For example, in *That They All May Be One*, Kasper wrote, "The freedom the Holy Spirit bestows is therefore not an individualistic freedom, but a communal freedom for others and with others; Christian freedom is essentially bound up with responsibility and finds its fulfillment in unselfish love and service for others."<sup>105</sup> This point was made in his earlier work, *The God of Jesus Christ*, where he spoke of the freedom of the Spirit as the context in which the various "fruits of the Spirit" create a new humanity:

Love of God and of neighbor is true Christian freedom in the Spirit (Gal. 5. 13)... The selflessness of love is true Christian freedom, and it is this that provides the context for the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5.22f). Through all these fruits the Spirit is bringing into existence the kingdom of the freedom of God's children (Rom. 8.8-10).<sup>106</sup>

While the freedom of the Spirit manifests itself in many charisms and fruits, Kasper argues that the charism of love is supreme:

The supreme gift and fruit of the Spirit is love (I Cor. 13), for he is truly free who is not tied to himself but can surrender himself in the series of love (Gal. 5.13). This freedom that is given by the Spirit shows itself most fully in a love that renounces self even in the situation of persecution and suffering.<sup>107</sup>

It should be noted that these fruits of the Spirit are visible signs that God's spirit is working in human beings. It is only through these fruits that the Spirit is *seen* to be working among and within individuals.

In summary, the Word of God reveals the mystery of God's love for humankind.

In doing so, it is an effective and creative Word, an event of power, grace, life and

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<sup>105</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 27.

<sup>106</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 207. See also *Jesus the Christ*, 262-3.

<sup>107</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 228.

salvation. The revelation of God's Word is more than a message; it is the personal self-communication of God to human beings. Jesus Christ was in the power of the Spirit the mold and receptacle for God's self-communication in history. Through Christ's obedience even unto death, the Spirit is liberated in order to become "the medium and the force in which Jesus Christ as the new Lord of the world is accessible to us."<sup>108</sup> The Spirit works through the event of God's Word to make manifest God's love for the world, to bring about true Christian freedom, which turns people away from egoism toward a profoundly unselfish love for God and neighbor. Such love is the supreme gift and fruit of the Holy Spirit, and is the means through which the reign of God is realized in history.

#### 4. *The Pneumatic-Soteriological Ecclesiology of Walter Kasper*

In Chapter Three I described Ratzinger's ecclesiology as a "eucharistic-*communio*" ecclesiology. Kasper's ecclesiology, on the other hand, can be best described as a "pneumatic-soteriological" ecclesiology. This is not to say that Ratzinger's ecclesiology is devoid of the Spirit or unconnected to the image of the church as a sacrament of salvation. Neither does it mean that Kasper's ecclesiology is missing critical elements of a robust eucharistic-*communio* ecclesiology. Rather, I want to emphasize the pneumatological and soteriological aspects of Kasper's ecclesiology here because it is these aspects of his ecclesiology which contribute most to a positive understanding of Protestant and Anglican ecclesiality and are important for the case this dissertation is making regarding "ecclesial fruitfulness" as a standard for "church."

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<sup>108</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 256.

#### 4.1 *A Pneumatological Understanding of “Church”*

Clearly, for Kasper, the Spirit is at work in a unique way in the church. Although the Spirit is mediated to human beings in a fragmentary way through the many religions of humankind, the Spirit is fully effected and expressed only in the church:

The unequivocal plentitude of the Spirit only finds its full effect and expression, however, where men explicitly confess Jesus Christ as Lord, where they allow themselves to be laid hold of by his measure, origin and goal. Where this happens through proclamation and the sacraments as signs of faith, there is the Church. It is the Body of Christ because in it the Spirit of Christ is present and vivifying in a public manner. And the Spirit produces in the Church both community with Jesus Christ and submission to him as head of the Church.<sup>109</sup>

Not only is the church the Body of Christ because of the vivifying presence of the Spirit within it, but Kasper further implies that this plentitude of the Spirit may be identified in any community wherein Jesus is explicitly confessed and experienced as the risen Lord through the public proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments as signs of faith. Kasper has been consistent in this description of the church as the home of the vivifying Spirit. In his work, *Faith and the Future*, he wrote, “Normally Jesus Christ encounters us by means of our encountering other men and women, concretely by means of the community of those who believe, the church. According to scripture the church is the normal place where the Spirit is at work....”<sup>110</sup> In *The God of Jesus Christ*, Kasper described “church” as the vessel in which the Spirit rejuvenates and keeps rejuvenating faith.<sup>111</sup> Finally, in *That They May All Be One*, he cited St. Irenaeus to support this understanding of the church as the location of the Spirit:

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<sup>109</sup> *Jesus the Christ*, 268.

<sup>110</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 59.

<sup>111</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 208.

‘Wherever the Church is, there is also the spirit of God; and wherever the spirit of God is, there is the Church and all Grace’ (*Adv. haer.* III, 24, 1). According to this statement, the Church is the place and home of the Holy Spirit; it gives life, inspires, stimulates and preserves the Church.<sup>112</sup>

Kasper’s understanding of church as the public place of the Spirit, who is the effective and vivifying presence of the risen Christ, offers an important theological foundation for developing a standard of “church” centered on the recognition in a Christian community of certain public signs which point to the active and effective presence of the Spirit of Christ in its midst.

But what exactly *are* the signs of the Spirit’s effectiveness in a community? In *God’s Time for Mankind* (1978), Kasper contended that there are many signs of the action of the Spirit in the church:

Nevertheless, Paul in his epistles tells of many signs of the action of the Spirit in the Church.... Today, too, aided by Jesus Christ and his Spirit, people accept and affirm one another; give one another courage and hope; help one another in a spirit of fellowship in word and deed; come together and thus enable one another to learn something of the joy of being Christians; assemble to celebrate the eucharist and thereby become aware that they cannot decide their lives for themselves but owe their fulfillment to the Spirit of God.<sup>113</sup>

A further sign of the Spirit acting in the church is prayer. Kasper suggested that the experience of prayer is “the most profound form of experience of the Spirit.”<sup>114</sup> In *That They May All Be One*, he noted that the gifts of salvation, particularly the word and the sacraments, are signs of the reality of “church” insofar as they are the means of the

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<sup>112</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 98. See also *ibid.*, 166.

<sup>113</sup> Walter Kasper, *God’s Time for Mankind: Reflections on the Church Year*, trans. John Griffiths (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1984): 63. Originally published as *Gottes Zeit für Menschen: Besinnungen zum Kirchenjahr* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978).

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

Spirit's effectiveness in the community.<sup>115</sup> These signs have one common feature, namely, they are signs of the vivifying presence of the Spirit effectively pouring out the gift of God's love within the Christian community.

Kasper's pneumatological ecclesiology allows him to distinguish (though never separate) the church as both an institution and event of the Spirit. Although Christ, through his death and resurrection, founded the church, this foundation was only completed through the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. He concludes therefore that "the Spirit can be called the co-founder of the Church, as the Church is at the same time both the institution and the event of the Spirit."<sup>116</sup> According to Kasper, the institutions of the church, though themselves a gift of the Spirit, are nevertheless subordinate to the action of the Spirit in realizing the mystery God's salvation, which is the mystery of God's love.<sup>117</sup> Thus, in *The God of Jesus Christ*, he wrote:

If the Spirit is the authentic presence and realization of the salvation given through Jesus Christ, then *whatever is external in the church—scripture and sacraments, offices and certainly the discipline of the church—has for its sole task to prepare men for receiving the gift of the Spirit, to serve in the transmission of this gift, and to enable it to work effectively.* This means that...the Holy Spirit is the internal life-principle or soul of the visible church.<sup>118</sup>

Kasper here makes an important point about the institution of the church and the action of the Spirit within it, namely that the external elements of the church, including ministerial office, though they are creations of the Spirit, are singularly directed to the transmission and effective realization in the Spirit of the salvation given through Jesus Christ. The institutions of the church, therefore, are never an end in themselves but are completely at

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<sup>115</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 54.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>117</sup> See *ibid.*, 166.

<sup>118</sup> *The God of Jesus Christ*, 228-9. Emphasis mine.

the service of the Spirit. Though also a work of the Spirit, the institutions of the church are derivative; they are a function of the Spirit.<sup>119</sup> Finally, in *That They May All Be One*, Kasper reflected on St. Thomas's teaching on the new covenant and applied it to the church:

Thomas goes a step further in a *quaestio* concerning the essence of the New Covenant, which has no parallel elsewhere in scholasticism, affirming that the *lex evangelica* is not an external but rather an internal law, i.e. the 'gratia Spiritus Sancti, quae datur per fidem Christi. Et ideo principaliter lex nova est ipsa gratia Spiritus sancti, quae datur Christi fidelibus' (*summa theol.* I/II 106, 1). This is an interesting and astonishing statement, since it implies that *everything associated with the Church as an institution should take second place; its only purpose is to lead to (dispositiva) and teach the correct use and application (ordinativa) of what is given by the Spirit. What is essential is only the Holy Spirit itself.*<sup>120</sup>

Kasper's pneumatological ecclesiology therefore is very amenable to judging the ecclesiality of a community based primarily on the effective and loving presence of the Spirit within its midst.

#### 4.2 "Church" as the Sacrament of Salvation

Because the church is the home of the public and effective presence of the Spirit, it is natural for Kasper to refer to the church as the sacrament of the Spirit, or the sacrament of the Spirit's salvation. In *Faith and the Future*, Kasper said, "The church as the community of those who believe is therefore the real place and indeed the sacrament of the Spirit..."<sup>121</sup> The church is the sacrament of hope for the world and the place, sign

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<sup>119</sup> See "The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem," in *Leadership in the Church*, 142: "In other words, the institution must be understood as a function of the Spirit, and ecclesiology as a function of pneumatology."

<sup>120</sup> *That They May All Be One* 98-9. Emphasis mine.

<sup>121</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 18.

and tool of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.<sup>122</sup> As such the church is much more than a religious organization:

The church is...the place, the area, the sacramental sign through which Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit is permanently present in history and in the world. The church is therefore not just an organization, not a system, not a religious agency, nor an organization for providing aid for social welfare, not simply an administrative apparatus, and not just an authority. In biblical language it is what God has built in the Holy Spirit; in dogmatic language it is the sacrament of the Spirit.<sup>123</sup>

In fact, for Kasper, the local church is the place where the reality of Christian salvation is actualized. The local community or congregation is “the realization and representation of the church in the place where the reality of Christian salvation and Jesus Christ’s work of reconciliation are meant to become something actually experienced by the individual Christian.”<sup>124</sup> It is “the making present—at once symbolic and efficacious—of the mystery of God’s salvation, a mystery which reached full realisation in Jesus Christ.”<sup>125</sup> This understanding of the church as the place of the realization of God’s salvation would seem to have significant implications for evaluating the ecclesiality of Protestant and Anglican communities. If the Catholic Church can recognize that Protestant and Anglican communities experience God’s salvation through the life, worship and sacramental ministry of their communities (see UR 3), then perhaps it should reconsider whether such communities are expressing the essential reality of what it means to be

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>125</sup> Foreword to Geoffrey Preston, *Faces of the Church: Meditations on a Mystery and its Images* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1997): ix.



“church,” despite any lack these communities might have in their celebration of the Eucharist?<sup>126</sup>

Not only is the church for Kasper the sacrament of the Spirit and the concrete and public realization of God’s salvation, but in *Transcending All Understanding* he also described the church as the *fruit* of God’s salvation: “Thus the Church herself is an essential fruit of God’s saving activity....”<sup>127</sup> Appealing to the ecclesiology of Karl Rahner, Kasper developed this point further in *Theology and Church*: “So the church is simultaneously the fruit of salvation and the means of salvation; for it is both an actualizing sign of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ, and a sacramental instrument for passing on this eschatological salvation to all human beings.”<sup>128</sup> Kasper not only described the church as the fruit and means of salvation, but argued that this understanding of the church should be the primary standard for evaluating ecclesial institutions:

We have already seen that the church as institution cannot be an end in itself; it is only an instrument (and a fruit) of the Christian reality of salvation, which is essentially spiritual, and *this provides the decisive criterion for the evaluation of the ecclesiastical institutions*. When we employ this criterion, we find not only the boundaries but also the necessity and justification of the church’s sacraments and ministries.<sup>129</sup>

Here Kasper’s position appears to affirm a fundamental thesis of this dissertation, namely that the ecclesiality of a Christian community should not be measured primarily by the validity of its sacraments and ministries, since such institutional elements, though

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<sup>127</sup> *Transcending All Understanding*, 109. See also *Faith and the Future*, 59.

<sup>128</sup> *Theology and Church*, 121.

<sup>129</sup> Walter Kasper, “Episcopal Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 96. Emphasis mine. Originally published as “Steuermann mitten im Sturm: Das Bischofsamt nach Thomas von Aquin,” in *Theologie und Kirche* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1987, 1999): 2:163-82.

necessary, are not ends in themselves, but rather the sacraments and ministries of a Christian community should be judged according to their fruitfulness in bringing God's salvation to human beings.

Kasper also noted that in extraordinary cases the outward and visible sign of the church may be severed from its inward saving reality. He emphasized that the visible elements of the church are essential as signs pointing to its true proper reality:

What is visible about the church is also part of its essential nature. That is to say, it also belongs to the true church. But of course what is visible is essential only as a sign and instrument of the true, proper reality of the church, which can only be grasped in faith.<sup>130</sup>

Kasper went on to argue that the essential reality of the church could be present even without the proper institutional forms and signs:

Yet in spite of this inherent connection, the visible church is not simply identical with the things to which it testifies. In extreme cases the outward sign and the inward salvific reality can also be sundered. *The outward sign, though retaining its reality, may become empty and unfruitful; and conversely, the saving reality can be conveyed even without the external ecclesial sign.*<sup>131</sup>

While Kasper affirms this possibility, he maintains that any such *de facto* separation, even if found in a majority of Christian communities, is an extraordinary situation which can never be a norm for Catholic ecclesiology:

The possibility of this separation was discussed extensively in scholastic sacramental theology. But there it counts as a special case, not the rule; and no ecclesiology can make a norm out of a special case, or turn this into the paradigm, as it were, for an understanding of the church. Consequently a distinction must be made between the 'ordinary' and the 'extra-ordinary' way of salvation. According to the divinely willed salvific order (which does not necessarily mean

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<sup>130</sup> *Theology and Church*, 118.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 122. Emphasis mine.

in the majority of cases) God's eschatological salvation is mediated through the sacramental signs of the church.<sup>132</sup>

The above statements of Kasper certainly have important implications for any measure of church based on "ecclesial fruitfulness." On the one hand, Kasper offers a good justification for the need to develop a standard for evaluating ecclesiality based primarily on the effectiveness or fruitfulness of a community in conveying and testifying to God's salvation in Jesus Christ. This is because he recognizes that the true and proper reality of the church can indeed exist apart from its normal or "ordinary" institutional structures. On the other hand, Kasper makes clear that these institutional structures can never be regarded as nonessential or unnecessary, since these forms are still divinely willed for the "ordinary" salvific order. For Protestant and Anglican communities, which, in this view, participate in the "extraordinary" way of salvation insofar as they have a traditionally invalid Eucharist and ministry, a standard of "church" based on "ecclesial fruitfulness" would provide a criterion for evaluating their institutional structures which is based on the effectiveness of these communities in bringing about God's salvation in Jesus Christ.

#### 4.3 *The Church as a Communion*

Kasper shares Ratzinger's understanding of the church as a communion. Like Ratzinger, he observed that the church is an icon of the Trinity, which is its archetype:

According to the council, the mystery of church means that in the Spirit we have access through Christ to the Father, so that in this way we may share in the divine nature. The communion of the church is prefigured, made possible and sustained by the communion of the Trinity. Ultimately, as the council says, echoing Cyprian, the martyr bishop, it is participation in the Trinitarian communion itself

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

(*Lumen gentium* 4; *Unitatis redintegratio* 2). The church is, as it were, the icon of the trinitarian fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.<sup>133</sup>

It is this common participation in the life of the Triune God which constitutes the church as a communion in the image of the Trinity.<sup>134</sup>

This participation of humanity in the communion of the triune God, which is the aim of all salvation history, is uniquely personified in the person of Jesus Christ. He is thus the epitome of all communion between God and humanity.<sup>135</sup> In *Theology and Church* Kasper wrote:

Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and human beings. Through him, God assumed human nature so that we might become sharers in the divine nature (*Ad gentes* 3). So by his incarnation the Son of God has in a certain way united himself with every human being (*Gaudium et spes* 22)—a statement which Pope John Paul II quoted several times in the encyclical *Redemptor hominis*. Jesus Christ is therefore the quintessence of all communion between God and human beings.<sup>136</sup>

Like Ratzinger, Kasper agrees that communion or fellowship has both a theological (vertical) and a communal (horizontal) dimension:

So communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit also affects communion among brothers and especially communion with the suffering. *Koinonia/communio* therefore has a theological and communal and a social dimension. It would be wrong to limit the ecclesial significance of *koinonia/communio* to the area of sacraments and worship, or even just to the eucharist. There is, so to speak, both a vertical and a horizontal dimension of communion.<sup>137</sup>

These two dimensions are not merely parallel and unconnected. Rather, communion with God is primary and becomes the basis of communion with one another:

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 152. See also Kasper, "Church as Communio," 235. See also Ratzinger, *Images of Hope*, 68-9.

<sup>134</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 26. See Ibid., 56.

<sup>135</sup> Kasper, "Church as Communio," 235.

<sup>136</sup> *Theology and Church*, 152.

<sup>137</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 56. See also Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 76.

Within the framework of this integral view of *communio*, we must bear in mind the relation of the foundations of the different aspects. The ‘vertical’ communion with God is the foundation and support for the ‘horizontal’ communion among Christians in churches and congregations.<sup>138</sup>

This horizontal communion among Christians finds concrete expression both in the local church and in the communion of local churches.<sup>139</sup> Concerning the former, Kasper wrote that communion between Christians occurs not only through common participation in word, sacraments and service, but also through “communication, information, prayer, exchange, co-operation, living together, mutual visits, friendship, celebrating and worshipping together, witnessing together and suffering together.”<sup>140</sup> Given that theological (or vertical) communion is the foundation and support for ecclesial communion, and given that such horizontal communion among Christians and local churches is observable, does this not suggest that where one finds such concrete signs of ecclesial communion and fellowship in a community that celebrates the Lord’s Supper, the presence of a more fundamental theological communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit also is found, despite whatever sacramental and institutional deficiencies there may be in the celebration of the Eucharist?

Kasper does hold that theological communion with God through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit has a concrete and visible structure; it is a sacramentally-mediated

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>139</sup> See Kasper, “Church as Communio,” 236: “The communio of man with God now lays the foundation for the fellowship of mankind with one another, thus for the tangible community of the Church. Thus we come to the ‘horizontal’ dimension of the concept of communio. This horizontal dimension also has various layers of meaning. On a ‘higher’ level it means the unity of the church within the diversity of local churches. On a ‘lower’ level it means the unity of the faithful in the *communio fidelium*.” See also *Theology and Church*, 156.

<sup>140</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 42.

communion centered around the Eucharist. In fact the word for communion (*koinonia*) originally designated a common participation in the sacraments of salvation:

For the Greek word *koinonia* (Latin *communio*) does not originally mean ‘community’ at all. It means participation, and more particularly, participation in the good things of salvation conferred by God: participation in the Holy Spirit, in new life, in love, in the gospel, but above all participation in the eucharist.<sup>141</sup>

Because this communion is sacramentally-mediated, Kasper emphasized that communion between Christians is never created merely from the act of congregating. In “Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism,” he wrote, “The church is not brought into being by people gathering together to form a church. Thus, in my view we do not enter the church through baptism; rather we are accepted into the church as a pre-existing reality of salvation.”<sup>142</sup> Individual Christians rather are incorporated into God’s sacramentally-given communion.<sup>143</sup>

Kasper thus makes clear that the idea of communion concerns foremost and primarily the reality or mystery from which the church comes and not its institutional structure. In *Theology and Church*, he wrote:

The term *communio* does not initially have anything to do with questions about the church’s structure. The word points rather to ‘the real thing’ (*res*) from which the church comes and for which it lives. *Communio* is not a description of the church’s structure. It describes its nature or, as the council puts it, its ‘mystery’.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> *Theology and Church*, 154. See also Kasper, “Church as Communio,” 236. See also Kasper, “The Decree on Ecumenism,” Section #4.

<sup>142</sup> Kasper, “Ecclesiological and Ecumenical Implications of Baptism,” 530. See also *Theology and Church*, 156: “The communion of the church does not come about ‘from below’. It is grace and gift, common participation in the one truth, in the one life, and in the one love which God communicates to us in word and sacrament through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.”

<sup>143</sup> See *That They May All Be One*, 59.

<sup>144</sup> *Theology and Church*, 151.

For Kasper communion relates back to mystery of God. As stated above “mystery” is not something unknowable or abstruse, but rather is God’s “transcendent saving reality which is revealed and manifested in a visible way.”<sup>145</sup> Kasper called this mystery of communion the essence of the church:

The concept of *communio* integrates various different levels of meaning. Primarily it has nothing to do with structural questions. The questions which have so greatly determined Catholic ecclesiology during the last three centuries, namely regarding the institutional form of the church, the organization of positions of office, duties etc. are secondary for the concept of *communio*. *Communio* refers primarily to the essence ‘thing’—(res) in which the church has its roots and for which it lives. It refers to the essence of the Church, its mystery and the transcendental reality of salvation which is revealed for all to see and becomes a reality through it.<sup>146</sup>

The church as a communion, therefore, is primarily concerned with its character as the place where the mystery and transcendent reality of God’s salvation in Christ is made manifest. It is possible, therefore, that Protestant and Anglican communities could be recognized as “churches” if it is shown that they participate in the mystery of communion, which is the essence of the church. In Chapter Five I will suggest “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a way to recognize such participation.

#### 4.4 *The Church as a Eucharistic Assembly*

Regarding the church as a eucharistic assembly, Kasper embraces many of the same positions as Ratzinger. In *Faith and the Future* he wrote that a Christian community is essentially a eucharistic community.<sup>147</sup> Kasper argued that etymologically,

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Kasper, “Church as *Communio*,” 234.

<sup>147</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 76.

the ancient word for “Eucharist” (*synaxis*) and the word for “church” (*ekklēsia*) mean the same thing:

One of the most ancient names for the Eucharist is *synaxis*, a coming together; an assembly. It is well known that the primary meaning of the Greek noun *ekklēsia*, as a translation of the Hebrew *qahal*, is ‘assembly.’ If we combine these two observations, we may define the church as a eucharistic assembly. The church is to be found wherever Christians assemble around the table of the Lord to celebrate his Supper.<sup>148</sup>

From the very beginning, he noted, the eucharistic assembly and the church were intimately linked and the church has from the outset understood herself as a eucharistic assembly.<sup>149</sup> This strong connection between the church and the celebration of the Eucharist means for Kasper that it is the Eucharist that makes the church (*ubi eucharistia, ibi ecclesia*):

‘Wherever the Eucharist is celebrated, there is the church.’ The Eucharist is not just one sacrament among others, it is the *sacramentum sacramentorum*, the source, center, and summit of the life of the church. In it, the entire mystery of our salvation finds its synthesis. The proposition *ubi eucharistia, ibi ecclesia* has become the fundamental principle of the modern eucharistic ecclesiology, which is not only found in Orthodox theologians but it also echoed in various ways in a number of texts of the Second Vatican Council and in postconciliar Catholic theologians.<sup>150</sup>

The church as a eucharistic assembly also means for Kasper that the church as a communion is not something Christians can “make” or organize by themselves.<sup>151</sup> Rather ecclesial communion is principally constituted by common participation in the sacrament of the Eucharist:

In the history of theology, the most important text was to become 1 Cor. 10:16f.: ‘Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the

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<sup>148</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 118.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-6.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*



blood of Christ? Is not the bread we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.' This text states that the *koinonia* in the one eucharistic bread is source and sign of the *koinonia* in the one body of the Church; the one eucharistic body of Christ is source and sign of the one ecclesial body of Christ.<sup>152</sup>

The Eucharist is the summit of ecclesial communion because “sharing (*koinōnia*, *participatio*) in the one chalice and the one bread gives us a share in the death and resurrection of Christ and binds us to one another so that we form the one body of the Lord, which is the church.”<sup>153</sup> Thus sharing in the one eucharistic body of Christ constitutes a sharing in the one ecclesial body of Christ and through this effects communion between Christians.<sup>154</sup> Kasper quoted Leo the Great who eloquently said: “The sharing in the body and blood of Christ brings about nothing other than this: that we are transferred into that which we receive.”<sup>155</sup>

Defining the church as essentially a eucharistic assembly has important implications for identifying a local Christian community as a “church.”<sup>156</sup> For Kasper, every authentic local church celebrating the Eucharist is “church” in the full sense, but it is not the *whole* church. This principle is based on the unity of Christ in the Eucharist:

Since there is only one Christ Jesus and only one eucharist, each church celebrating the eucharist necessarily stands in communion with all other churches. The one church exists in and of the local churches (*LG*, 23), and the local churches exist vice versa in and of the one church (*Communiones notio*, 9).<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 55. See also *Theology and Church*, 154.

<sup>153</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 136.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-7.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>156</sup> In Chapter Five I shall attempt to address the very pertinent theological question of how a Christian community with an invalid Eucharist could be considered a “church” if the church is essentially defined as a eucharistic assembly. See especially pages 333-37.

<sup>157</sup> Kasper, “The Decree on Ecumenism,” Section #4. See also Kasper, “Church as Communio,” 239.

This means that no authentic local church can celebrate the Eucharist in isolation from other eucharistic assemblies. It can only celebrate the Eucharist properly in communion with all other communities celebrating the Eucharist.<sup>158</sup> Kasper wrote that “eucharistic ecclesiology is the basis not of the independence of the local churches but of their interdependence, or more precisely, of their *perichoresis*, that is, their mutual compenetration.”<sup>159</sup> Each local church is in its innermost essence in *communio* with all other local churches and this *communio* receives its highest expression in the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>160</sup> Unlike Ratzinger, who argued for the ontological priority of the universal church over the local church, Kasper believes the universal church exists only in and out of the local churches. Likewise, the local churches only exist in and out of the universal church.<sup>161</sup>

Kasper, in *Theology and Church*, described the eucharistic communion that constitutes the church as a fruit of salvation as well as the signs and means of that salvation:

As eucharistic communion, the church is not merely the reflection of the trinitarian communion; it also makes that communion present. It is not merely the sign and means of salvation, but also its fruit. As eucharistic communion, it is the all-surpassing response to the fundamental human cry for fellowship.<sup>162</sup>

Kasper also argued that the church’s proclamations, sacraments (including the Eucharist) and ministries are not the ends in themselves but fruits of as well as effective means and instruments in the service of the Christian life in and with God:

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<sup>158</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 139-40.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 140. See also *That They May All Be One*, 68. See also *Theology and Church* 160.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>161</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 140.

<sup>162</sup> *Theology and Church*, 155.

At the same time, as a fruit of the reality of salvation, they have a genuine efficacy. Hence, we must not misunderstand their instrumental character in a superficial manner; they are not mere external signs, but signs permeated by the Holy Spirit in such a way that they bring about in his power what they signify. We can go even further: the Eucharist, the highest of all the sacraments, not only brings about but also contains what it signifies. This is why it is the center and the summit of the church's life.<sup>163</sup>

For Kasper then, the church's sacramental and institutional elements (including especially the Eucharist) are all fruits of a more fundamental Christian experience of the reality of God's salvation in Christ through the Holy Spirit. These elements of the church nevertheless are not merely external and disposable instruments, but are the means and signs which foster communion in the image of the triune God and effectively communicate and bring about this reality of God's salvation in the community. This means that although the institutional and sacramental structures of the church can never be dismissed as arbitrary or inessential to the church's constitution and life, nevertheless it is also true that a Christian community that has a defective celebration of the Eucharist may nevertheless still possess and experience the reality of God's salvation. If this is possible, then perhaps the Catholic Church could consider recognizing as "churches" those Christian communities who testify to and show evidence of experiencing God's salvation through the celebration of the Eucharist, even if their eucharistic celebration is considered invalid?

##### 5. *The Eucharistic Mystery and the Church*

Kasper agrees with Ratzinger that the Protestant and Anglican celebration of the Eucharist lacks the integral and genuine reality of the eucharistic mystery and that this is

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<sup>163</sup> "Episcopal Office," in *Leadership in the Church*, 82.

the reason for the distinction between “churches” and “ecclesial communities.”<sup>164</sup> Here, as in Chapter Three, I shall explore Kasper’s understanding of the eucharistic mystery with an aim toward understanding what exactly he believes is missing in the Protestant and Anglican Eucharist. In particular I shall explore his description of the basic form of the Eucharist and the conditions necessary to bring out the full reality of the eucharistic mystery.

### 5.1 *The Essential Reality of the Eucharistic Mystery*

In order to grasp Kasper’s understanding of the eucharistic mystery, it is important first to describe the goal and aim of the eucharistic mystery. In *Sacrament of Unity*, Kasper suggested that the efficacy of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist is directed precisely towards the goal and aim of the *koinōnia* (*communio*) in and with Jesus Christ:

The Holy Spirit is sent out to accomplish the universal realization of the work of Jesus Christ and thus to integrate the world and history ‘in Christ.’ The goal of the Holy Spirit’s activity in the Eucharist is thus *koinōnia* (*communio*) in and with Jesus Christ. This *communio* must be understood both in personal terms, as a participation in Christ and as the most utterly personal fellowship with him, and in ecclesial terms, as fellowship in Christ. The goal and the fulfillment of the Eucharistic celebration are personal and ecclesial *communio*, expressed in the kiss of peace (the *pax*) and in holy communion. Hence we may follow Augustine in calling the Eucharist the sign of unity and the bond of love.<sup>165</sup>

Furthermore, Kasper noted that for theologians such as Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, this understanding of the Eucharist as the “sacrament of unity” is not a pious exaggeration, something that must be dealt with after dealing with the dogmatic truths of the real presence and the Eucharist as a sacrifice:

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<sup>164</sup> See Kasper, “The Decree on Ecumenism,” Section #4.

<sup>165</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 105. See also *Theology and Church*, 188.

On the contrary, this understanding is essential in their eyes: indeed, it is the essential truth about the Eucharist. The main point for Bonaventure and Thomas is not the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, which they consider only an intermediary reality. They call this *res et sacramentum*, that is a ‘thing’ which itself in turn is a sign pointing to the real ‘thing,’ and this real *res* of the Eucharist is the unity of the church. The unity of the church is the reason why the Eucharist exists.<sup>166</sup>

In *That They May All Be One*, Kasper noted, “For Thomas the real presence of Jesus Christ in the eucharist is only an intermediate reality, the *res et sacramentum*; the *res sacramenti* itself is the unity of the Church (*Summa theol.* III, 73:1; 79:5).”<sup>167</sup> The Eucharist brings about and effects the purification, maturing and deepening of the unity of those Christians who share in the common faith and baptism.<sup>168</sup>

Kasper has also spoken of the celebration of the Eucharist as a sign of the new order of salvation:

*The eucharist is a sign of the new era of salvation and the new saving order—a sign imbued with fulfilled reality.* This new reality of salvation embraces both the relationship of human beings to God, and their relationship to one another. Paul thinks this through to the end. For him, participation in the eucharistic body of the Lord is at the same time fellowship with the body of Christ in the church (I Cor. 10.16f.). When it celebrates the eucharist, the church is therefore the new order of salvation. Hardly anyone has understood this connection as profoundly as Augustine. He could actually say: ‘So if you yourselves be the body of Christ and his members, then on the eucharistic table lies your own mystery.... You shall be what you see, and you shall receive what you are.’<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 119-120.

<sup>167</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 57. See also “Episcopal Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 104: “The significance of these affirmations becomes clear when we consider the connection that Thomas makes between the eucharistic *corpus Christi verum* and the ecclesial *corpus Christi mysticum*. The true, bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament is not the real goal, the real matter with which this sacrament is concerned (*res sacramenti*); this is only an intermediate reality (*res et sacramentum*) that points us symbolically and causally to the real matter, namely, the upbuilding of the mystical body of the Lord.”

<sup>168</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 109.

<sup>169</sup> *Theology and Church*, 189. Emphasis mine. See also *Sacrament of Unity*, 107.

Kasper explained that the Eucharist is a sign of the new saving order insofar as it “makes present and synthesizes the entire Christian mystery of salvation in a sacramental manner.”<sup>170</sup>

The Eucharist for Kasper forms the sacramental parallel to the creed. Both sum up the mystery of salvation in their own way—the Eucharist is a sacramental summary just as the creed is a dogmatic summary. Both are a symbol of the one mystery of God’s salvation through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.<sup>171</sup> In summary, Kasper responded to his own concluding question in *Theology and Church*, “What, then *is* the Eucharist?” by saying:

The eucharist makes present the whole Christian mystery of salvation, and sums it up sacramentally. It embraces creation and the eschatological new creation; it expresses the movement of God to human beings, as well as the responding movement of human beings and humanity to God; it is the all-comprehensive legacy of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; is the glorification of God and the salvation of men and women, personally and ecclesially; it is gift and charge in one.<sup>172</sup>

The essential reality of the eucharistic mystery for Kasper, therefore, concerns more than the real presence of Christ in the sacrament, which Kasper, following the thought of St. Thomas and St Bonaventure, considers to be an intermediate reality of the sacrament. Given this understanding of the essential reality of the Eucharist, it is well worth considering whether Protestant and Anglican communities might possess enough of the reality of the eucharistic mystery to be understood as a “church” despite any remaining questions regarding the real presence of Christ in their eucharistic celebrations.

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<sup>170</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 113.

<sup>171</sup> See *Sacrament of Unity*, 115-6. See also *Theology and Church*, 194.

<sup>172</sup> *Theology and Church*, 192-3.

## 5.2 *The Basic Form of the Eucharist and the Unity of its Aspects*

In order to better explore the question of what according to Kasper exactly is missing from the reality of the eucharistic mystery in Protestant and Anglican communities, one needs to examine what he considers to be the basic form of the Eucharist as well as what constitutes the unity of the Eucharist's numerous theological aspects or dimensions. As has been mentioned above, Kasper noted that scholastic theology often failed to properly elucidate the Eucharist in terms of its wholeness and totality. It could only describe in parallel fashion the major aspects of the Eucharist and it usually failed to adequately demonstrate their inner unity. Thus, in *Theology and Church*, he described the relationship of the individual aspects of the Eucharist to its holistic totality:

The eucharistic Real Presence; the eucharist as sacrifice; the eucharist as sacrament: in scholastic theology these three aspects of the eucharist stand parallel to one another and follow one another, in a rather unrelated way. But these three aspects constitute an indissoluble inner unity. They are aspects of a single whole, the sacramental making-present of the one mystery of salvation, Jesus Christ.<sup>173</sup>

How this single whole, this sacramental making present of the one mystery of salvation, Jesus Christ, comes about, according to Kasper, is in the *anamnesis* or memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ in the Eucharist. The biblical concept of memorial "refers not to a subjective act of remembering but to a liturgical-sacramental celebration of remembrance in which the salvific deed, which belongs to the past is made

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<sup>173</sup> *Theology and Church*, 193. See also *Sacrament of Unity*, 115.

objectively present by means of real symbols.”<sup>174</sup> Just as the Jewish prayers of Jesus’ time were *anamneses* of God’s salvific deeds, “so the Eucharist is a memorial in the words and actions of the death and resurrection of Jesus which makes these events present, together with the prayer for his coming: *Maranatha!* (1 Cor 16:22).”<sup>175</sup>

Kasper further described the *anamnesis* of Christ’s death and resurrection as the inner unity of the Eucharist:

The *anamnesis* of Christ provides the inward unity of its different aspects. Through this memorial, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are made sacramentally present in the feast in the form of bread and wine, the Lord who is present is extolled, and his final coming implored; and thus the fellowship (*communio*) with the Lord is communicated. *The presence of Christ’s person and work, sacramentally mediated through remembrance in word and act, is therefore the inward unifying ground for the different aspects of the eucharist.*<sup>176</sup>

Likewise, in *That They May All Be One*, Kasper wrote, “We may sum up by saying that the institution by Jesus is the point of departure and the basis of the Eucharist, and that the *anamnesis* of Christ forms the inner unity of the various aspects of the Eucharist.”<sup>177</sup>

Liturgical remembrance in word and act of Christ’s death and resurrection therefore is for Kasper the centerpiece of the celebration of the Eucharist and the way in which the presence of Christ is made real in the worshipping community.

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<sup>174</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 91-2. See also *Theology and Church*, 181: “Memorial in the biblical sense is at all events never a merely subjective remembrance. It is a liturgical, sacramental memorial celebration in which a past salvific act is made objectively present by means of true symbol. This applies to the Feast of Tabernacles, for example (Lev. 23.33ff.), and above all to the Passover, as a day for remembering the liberation from Egyptian slavery (Ex. 12. 14). By way of this remembrance, in each generation, everyone is duty bound ‘to look upon himself as if he had come out of Egypt.’ Through the liturgical actualization, the past act of salvation is supposed to be laid before God, and is pleaded before him, so that he may remember it and bring it to eschatological fulfillment.”

<sup>175</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 95.

<sup>176</sup> *Theology and Church*, 183. Emphasis mine. See also *Sacrament of Unity*, 96: “Thus, the Eucharist mediates fellowship (*communio*) with the Lord. The presence of the person and work of Jesus Christ, mediated sacramentally by the memorial in words and actions, is the inner basis which unites the various aspects of the Eucharist.”

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-6.



Although the Scriptures testify that the mystery of God in Jesus Christ is made present first and foremost through the Word, Kasper has emphasized that the *anamnesis* of Christ, which mediates the presence of Christ sacramentally, is an “embodied” word. Following the thought of Augustine and Aquinas, he connects the celebration of the Eucharist with the proclamation of God’s Word through an appeal to 1 Cor. 11.26, wherein Paul says, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.” Because the sacraments are symbolic proclamations of God’s Word, Kasper argued that this provides the justification for seeing such sacramental acts as an integral part of the actualization of God’s saving mystery in Jesus Christ.<sup>178</sup>

In fact, he noted that it is through understanding the *anamnesis* as a visible, embodied proclamation of God’s Word that one can better understand the objective presence of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross in the eucharistic celebration.<sup>179</sup> It is in this context that Kasper discussed the basic form of the Eucharist, arguing that the offering of the gifts in thanksgiving is the sacramental form in which the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ is made present in remembrance.<sup>180</sup> Memorial in praise is thus for Kasper the basic form of the Eucharist: “If thanksgiving is the fundamental form of the eucharist, then the primal meaning of the eucharistic celebration is the *cultus divinus*, the glorification, adoration, praise and exaltation of God in the remembrance of his mighty acts.”<sup>181</sup> Understanding the basic form of the Eucharist as primarily a memorial of

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<sup>178</sup> *Theology and Church*, 122-3. See also *ibid.*, 183. See also *Sacrament of Unity*, 95.

<sup>179</sup> *Theology and Church*, 183.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

thanksgiving, praise, adoration and exultation of God would seem to provide good grounds for possibly recognizing the basic form of the Eucharist in Protestant and Anglican communities.

Moreover, while memorial in thanksgiving and praise is the basic form of the Eucharist, Kasper, in *Sacrament of Unity*, calls the *epiclesis*, the prayer for the sending forth of the Spirit, the innermost soul of the Eucharist:

Accordingly, an inherent necessity makes the Eucharist an epiclesis, a request for the sending of the Spirit so that he may bring about the deeds of salvation that become a present reality in the anamnesis. The epiclesis is thus (so to speak) the innermost soul of the Eucharist; it is in this sense that the Eucharist, or more precisely the *prosphora* and *epiklēsis* together, constitutes the form of the Lord's Supper.<sup>182</sup>

Thus it is a eucharistic community's prayer to the Spirit, and the Spirit's answer to that prayer, which makes the words and acts of the *anamnesis* effective is bringing about God's work of salvation in the celebrating community. This raises the question of whether the Spirit indeed answers this prayer in any non-Catholic eucharistic celebration. What are the criteria for discerning whether a non-Catholic Christian community's prayer to the Spirit is effectively answered?

### 5.3 *The Necessary Conditions for the Eucharistic Mystery*

Kasper offers both a communal and a sacramental criterion for judging the reality of a community's eucharistic celebration. Both center on the need for a eucharistic president who has been validly ordained and is in communion with a bishop in the episcopal college. As he argued in a 1983 article (written in response to some controversial ideas of Edward Schillebeeckx) the communal criterion means that the

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<sup>182</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 101. See also *Theology and Church*, 186.

celebration of the Eucharist in a local church must occur in communion with all other local churches:

If the eucharist is the sacrament of unity and the bond of love, as the Fourth Lateran, the Tridentine and Second Vatican Councils say, following Augustine, then it is the sacrament of the one Church in and out (*in und aus*) of the many local churches that celebrate the eucharist. Then the celebration of the eucharist in a local church is possible only in communion with every other local church and with the Church that is universal, one, catholic and apostolic in time and space. *A celebration of the eucharist without this unity or a celebration of the eucharist against this unity would be self-contradictory.*<sup>183</sup>

What would happen if a Christian community appointed its own eucharistic president outside the communion of the local bishop? Kasper, responding to Schillebeeckx, stated, “What is supposed to be a sign of unity would then be a cause for dissension and an occasion for schism.”<sup>184</sup> For this reason, it is no incidental matter that the names of the local bishop and the pope are mentioned in the canon of the Mass. Such a practice “is an expression of the *communio* within which alone the individual eucharistic celebration is meaningful, in the light of its profoundest essence.”<sup>185</sup>

Kasper’s sacramental criterion for the proper reality of the eucharistic mystery concerns the sacramental nature of God’s salvation and how it is bestowed in a community. In *Sacrament of Unity*, he explained that priestly ordination is necessary to celebrate the Eucharist because it is rooted in God’s salvific action in Jesus’ death and resurrection. The Eucharist, as the fulfilled sign of God’s abiding love that comes to us

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<sup>183</sup> Walter Kasper, “Ministry in the Church: Taking Issue with Edward Schillebeeckx,” *Communio* 10 (1983): 194. Emphasis mine. See also *Faith and the Future*, 76: “But the Eucharist as the sacrament of unity is not possible without the priestly ministry of unity.”

<sup>184</sup> Kasper, “Ministry in the Church,” 194.

<sup>185</sup> *Theology and Church*, 191. See also *Sacrament of Unity*, 109-10.

in Jesus Christ, can never be thought of as coming from “below” or as something generated from within the community:

God’s salvation never comes from ourselves—from the individual Christian or from the community. It always comes ‘from outside’ and ‘from above.’ As I shall show below, this principle finds sacramental and symbolic expression in priestly ordination and in the fact that the priestly ministry is absolutely necessary, if the Eucharist is to be celebrated.<sup>186</sup>

Kasper wrote, “This ‘antecedent’ character and this coming of salvation to us ‘from outside’ and ‘from above’ find their sacramental and symbolic expression in the mission of the priest in the parish and in his relation vis-à-vis the community.”<sup>187</sup> For the above communal and theological reasons, therefore, Kasper argued, “A priestless community is a self-contradiction, and a celebration of the Eucharist without the ministry of the priest is an impossibility.”<sup>188</sup>

#### *5.4 The Fruitfulness of the Eucharist*

While one may conclude that a Christian community does not possess the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery because it is lacking in either the communal or sacramental conditions for its presence, one also might positively judge the reality of community’s Eucharist on the power and strength it provides to effect transformation in the lives of those within the community. While Kasper himself does not argue this way, he does discuss how the Eucharist provides such fruitful power to those who participate in it. In *Faith and the Future* he wrote, “For Christians [the Eucharist] is always the pledge that love does transform the world, and it provides the strength for this to

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<sup>186</sup> *Sacrament of Unity* 21-2. See also “Ministry in the Church,” 191.

<sup>187</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 24.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

happen.”<sup>189</sup> Likewise, in *God’s Time for Mankind*, he wrote, “In the eucharistic meal [Christ] gives us himself as the power of life, as the power by which we in return can give ourselves as free gifts.”<sup>190</sup> More recently, Kasper maintained that the Eucharist is the source of all vitality in a community’s life: “Everything else tends toward the Eucharist, and from it goes forth the power that imparts vigor to every other sphere of church life—and not least the power we need in our own personal life.”<sup>191</sup>

Kasper also has argued that the primary purpose of all the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist) is to produce a fruitful effect in the community and in its members’ lives. Kasper argued in *Faith and the Future* that the sacramental ministry is based on the proclamation of the Word of God and is directed to the building up of the community. For this reason, he maintained, “The sacraments are only fruitful and meaningful when they actually arouse faith, hope, and love.”<sup>192</sup> In *God’s Time for Mankind*, Kasper applied this principle explicitly to the Eucharist:

*For the principal thing is that the transformation of the bread and the wine should continue in the transformation of our lives; that the distribution of the bread should not be restricted to the church; that those who enter it to eat should be wholly seized by Jesus Christ; that they should receive Jesus Christ and allow themselves to be seized by him in all his reality.*<sup>193</sup>

In *Sacrament of Unity* he said that the celebration of the Eucharist ought to have an effect on our daily living. Just as Jesus makes himself a gift for us, we too should make ourselves a gift for others.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 102.

<sup>190</sup> *God’s Time for Mankind*, 56.

<sup>191</sup> *Sacrament of Unity*, 13.

<sup>192</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 74.

<sup>193</sup> *God’s Time for Mankind*, 45. Emphasis mine.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

What happens if such a transformation does not happen? Kasper wrote in *Theology and Church* that “the nature of the eucharist is equally violated if we fail to recognize the ethical presuppositions and consequences of the common celebration: the practically realized *agape* (cf. Matt. 5.23f.), whose minimum requirement is the fulfillment of the demands of social justice.”<sup>195</sup> This statement of Kasper raises important questions when considering what the “genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery” really means. As Kasper has described above, it is certainly possible that a Catholic parish may celebrate the Eucharist in a way that is valid yet also meaningless, while a Protestant or Anglican community may celebrate the Lord’s Supper in a way that is invalid yet fruitful and effective in transforming the lives of its members. If, therefore, the ongoing transformation of people’s lives is the principal aim of the Eucharist, and if such a transformation fails to occur in those who regularly partake of the Eucharist, then is not the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery lacking in a more profound manner than when the eucharistic celebration objectively has the real presence of Christ but is subjectively ineffective and fruitless in promoting the community’s ongoing conversion? Would it make sense in such a case to say the Catholic celebration of the Eucharist contains the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery while the Protestant or Anglican celebration of the Lord’s Supper does not?

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<sup>195</sup> *Theology and Church*, 191.

## 6. *The Sacrament of Order and Apostolic Succession*

In Chapter Three I explored Ratzinger's understanding of the sacramental priesthood and its importance for evaluating the ecclesiality of a Christian community. While Kasper's thought is very similar to Ratzinger's on both the nature and importance of the sacrament of order and of episcopacy in the historic apostolic succession for the celebration of the Eucharist, he nevertheless has a few noteworthy contributions that serve to enrich an understanding of Protestant and Anglican ministry and, as a consequence, the understanding of the ecclesiality of their eucharistic assemblies.

### 6.1 *The Sacrament of Order and the Nature of the Sacramental Priesthood*

Kasper, like Ratzinger, agrees that the essence of the priesthood lies in its service to the community on behalf of and with the authority of Christ. In *Faith and the Future*, Kasper cited the first letter to the Corinthians where Paul says: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1). Kasper opined that one "could hardly describe the priest's nature and mission more precisely."<sup>196</sup> He appealed to a phrase in the letter to the Ephesians 4:12 to describe the specific mission of the special priesthood:

This is where the task of the special priesthood lies. Following a phrase in the letter to the Ephesians, it serves 'the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry' (4:12). It is a ministry directed to other ministries, a ministry exercised in the power of Jesus Christ. The priest must equip his congregation for their ministry by making Jesus Christ present as their foundation and their standard.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 65-66.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-2.

Likewise in his essay “Priestly Office,” Kasper wrote that “the special task of ministerial service is to equip the other forms of service to serve; it serves the other services and helps thereby to build up the whole body of Christ.”<sup>198</sup>

For Kasper, all Christian priesthood has its source and foundation in the unique priesthood of Christ. He noted that the Bible reserves the title of “priest” for the one high priest Jesus Christ: “Jesus Christ, the one mediator between God and man, is at the same time the one and only priest of the new covenant. All other priesthood can only be a sharing in his priesthood.”<sup>199</sup> Kasper described the nature of Christ’s priesthood as rooted in the image of the cross: “[Christ] accomplishes his priesthood on the cross: he directs us to God while radically emptying himself so as to be totally a sign and a void for God. The cross is therefore the basic image and the permanent norm of Christian priesthood.”<sup>200</sup> A priest therefore, as sharing in the priesthood of Christ, must likewise be God’s sign and witness in the world. He can do this only by totally entering into the mode of Jesus’ being on the cross.<sup>201</sup> The priest’s life and work must be entirely based on the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Kasper wrote that the priest “must, as it were, become a void to be filled by the Spirit of Jesus Christ who through him makes the person and work of Jesus Christ present here and now in human history.”<sup>202</sup>

It is natural, given that Kasper sees the purpose of the priesthood as making present the person and work of Jesus in human history, for him to see ordination to the priesthood to be primarily directed to the celebration of the Eucharist. In *Faith and the*

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<sup>198</sup> “Priestly Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 56.

<sup>199</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 71-72.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.



*Future*, Kasper argued: “The celebration of the sacraments, especially the celebration of the Eucharist, is therefore the core and summit of the priestly ministry.”<sup>203</sup> Likewise in his essay, “Episcopal Office,” he wrote:

Ultimately, all the sacraments (and in a special manner the sacrament of orders) are ordered toward the sacrament of sacraments, the Eucharist, which is the greatest and the preeminent sacrament. This is why the sacrament of orders must be understood primarily in relation to the Eucharist; and this position leads in turn to the view that *priestly ordination is primarily the empowerment to consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ*.<sup>204</sup>

Kasper understands the sacrament of order as enabling a baptized Christian to celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist. Like Ratzinger, he argued that the different charismata of the baptized are truly gifts of the Spirit and not simply a calling of his or her own making. Kasper wrote of the baptismal priesthood that “this joint sharing in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ is not something that one simply ‘has’ or can rely on: it is something that is given to us and must continually be imparted to us anew.”<sup>205</sup> In his essay, “Priestly Office,” Kasper further explained that “individual Christians do not simply ‘possess’ their own charism; nor does the church, as Christ’s body, owe its life to itself or to its own power.”<sup>206</sup> Rather “in all that they do, both the church and every individual Christian owe their life completely to the Lord who is present in his body. Their life comes not “from below,” but “from above,” since “Christ is the Head [of the Body]....”<sup>207</sup> This “from above” character of the priesthood of the baptized also applies

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>204</sup> “Episcopal Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 100. Emphasis mine.

<sup>205</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 71. See also Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith*, 162-3.

<sup>206</sup> “Priestly Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 57.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

to the ministerial priesthood. Kasper, like Ratzinger, described the sacramental priesthood as a representation of the ministry of Christ:

This leads us to the all-important thesis that the service of the official ministry is addressed both to individuals and to the church as a whole. As such, it is a *repraesentatio* of the ministry that Jesus Christ, its Head, performs for the church, keeping it alive, nourishing it, purifying, sanctifying, leading, guiding, governing, unifying it, and keeping it together. The official ministry is not only *repraesentatio Christi* in some general sense; it is *repraesentatio Christi capitis Ecclesiae*.<sup>208</sup>

It is through this *repraesentatio Christi capitis* that the special priesthood testifies that the church draws its life not from its own self, but from Jesus Christ.<sup>209</sup>

Kasper explained the nature of the character or power imprinted on the ordinand in the sacrament of order as follows:

By the laying on of hands and prayer, the sacrament of ordination bestows its essential element, a specific equality with Jesus Christ, and thereby constitutes the one ordained to be a public and official witness of Jesus Christ in ministry to the other ministries.<sup>210</sup>

In his article “Ministry in the Church,” he emphasized that this sacramental equality with Jesus Christ is an ontological determination of that person, which nevertheless does not exist *in addition* to that person’s essential relations and functions but rather *in* them. The essential element of the sacrament of order is that it stamps a person in his or her very nature by drawing that person completely into a servant relationship with Christ that is directed toward the building up of the community: “The ontological meaning of the sacramental character, then, signifies that the commission of the priest from Jesus Christ

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 57-58.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>210</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 72.

and the promise that is entrusted to him along with it take him up in service in his whole person and forever stamp him in his very nature.”<sup>211</sup>

In “Episcopal Office,” Kasper emphasized that the spiritual power bestowed in the sacrament of order is understood as a spiritual authority exercised for the salvation of others:

According to the will of Jesus Christ, there does exist an authority that is exercised, not for one’s own benefit, but for the benefit and the salvation of others. This authority is concerned with other people’s salvation. The *praeeminentia* that is a characteristic of authority is a spiritual and pastoral service: *praeesse*, ‘being at the head,’ means *prodesse*, ‘being at the service’ of others.<sup>212</sup>

The exercise of this authority is an essential dimension of the Christian order of salvation, since no one can redeem himself. Everyone depends on redemption “from outside” and “from above.” The ministerial priesthood itself signifies that salvation comes “from outside” and “from above” through the exercise of the spiritual authority in the celebration of the sacraments:

Spiritual authority is a sign that makes it clear that the reality of Christian salvation is gift and grace; though, to be precise, this authority does not mediate salvation itself, but only the means of salvation, namely, the sacraments. It shows that God wishes to be close to us in Jesus Christ in a human manner, through other human beings, for the sake of our salvation.<sup>213</sup>

Kasper argued that it is in the sacrament of order that this spiritual power or authority is normally bestowed.<sup>214</sup> Furthermore, nobody can give himself or herself this spiritual authority:

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<sup>211</sup> Kasper, “Ministry in the Church,” 189.

<sup>212</sup> “Episcopal Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 108-9.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 98-9.

No human being can attribute such spiritual authority to himself, still less is it a power that one might seize for oneself—one must receive the empowerment to exercise it, and this takes place through the sacramental character conferred by the sacrament of ordination, which configures the ordinand to the unique high priest Jesus Christ, whose whole existence is for others. Accordingly, spiritual authority cannot be exercised in one's own name, but only in the name and in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>215</sup>

When the priest exercises his spiritual authority, it ceases to belong to the ecclesial minister himself, since the basic reality of this authority is to point beyond the priest to Jesus Christ.<sup>216</sup>

Finally, a comment Kasper made in his 1974 article, "Church Authority by Ecumenical Consensus?" is worth mentioning. In discussing ecumenical prospects for a common understanding of ministerial office, he called the issue of whether ordination is to be understood as a sacrament or not as merely a matter of semantics: "What counts is whether by prayer and laying on of hands there is effectively conferred a gift of the Spirit for the carrying out of a service."<sup>217</sup> Perhaps such a description of Protestant and Anglican ordination could provide a good litmus test for judging the validity of Protestant and Anglican ministry? For if ordination is primarily about conferring the gift of the Spirit necessary to celebrate the sacraments in the person of Christ on behalf of the salvation of others, then it seems appropriate to judge whether this gift was in fact conferred through an examination of the effectiveness or fruitfulness that non-Catholic ministries exhibit in bringing salvation to their members. If the Catholic Church can recognize that such ministries are fruitful in mediating salvation to their communities

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>217</sup> Kasper, "Church Authority by Ecumenical Consensus?" 5.

through the celebration of the sacraments (especially the Eucharist), then is it not reasonable to suggest that the Spirit is in fact conveying the spiritual authority and power necessary for a genuinely sacramental ministry?<sup>218</sup>

## 6.2 *Episcopal Office and Episcopal Collegiality*

Despite the above suggestion that a ministry possibly could be validated if it was recognized as being an effective Spirit-bestowed gift for service to the community, Kasper has argued differently. In *Faith and the Future* he maintained that ministry not in full communion with the bishop does not properly fulfill its role as a sign of unity:

Hence for Paul a fundamental sign of the genuineness of the Spirit and for the discernment of spirits is whether it serves the building up of the unity of the church or lives in dispute or even in permanent conflict with the church. What applies above all to the priestly ministry is ‘Do not break the bond of unity.’ The priestly ministry is only possible in community with the entire *presbyterium* under the leadership of the bishop.<sup>219</sup>

Moreover, in his article “Ministry in the Church,” Kasper cited canon six of the Council of Chalcedon, which says that no valid ministry can exist without or, indeed, opposed to the bishop.<sup>220</sup>

Arguing that very goal of the episcopal office, that which gives it meaning, is the “peace of the church” (*pax ecclesiae*), Kasper stated: “The *pax ecclesiae* that the bishop’s spiritual authority is meant to serve is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and a proleptic image of the eschatological peace that it makes present.”<sup>221</sup> It is because of this greater

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<sup>218</sup> In contrast, some theologians, such as Francis Sullivan, argue that an invalid ministry may be fruitful in bringing grace and salvation through its ministry of the Word, but cannot be called “sacramental” because it does not bring about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. See Francis Sullivan, in “‘Ecclesial Communities’ and their ‘Defectus Sacramenti Ordinis,’” *Ecumenical Trends* 39, no. 3 (March 2010): 7.

<sup>219</sup> *Faith and the Future*, 82-3.

<sup>220</sup> Kasper, “Ministry in the Church,” 191.

<sup>221</sup> “Episcopal Office,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 112-3. See also *ibid.*, 91.

responsibility for the unity of the church, which is the very *res* of the Eucharist, that episcopal ordination contains the fullness of the sacrament of orders:

Since the Episcopal office is antecedent and superior to that of the priest with regard to this upbuilding of the church, it is ordered in a particular way to the ‘real concern’ of the Eucharist. As Ignatius of Antioch ruled, as early as the second century, every celebration of the Eucharist must occur in fellowship with the bishop.<sup>222</sup>

The episcopal office is an office of unity not only within the local church, but it is also a sign and instrument of unity between the local churches of all times and places within the communion of the one universal church.<sup>223</sup> Kasper described the implications of this dimension of the episcopal office for the episcopate as a whole:

This understanding of church unity has consequences for the definition of the relationship of each individual bishop to the episcopate as a whole, and to the Pope. The Council describes this relationship as one of collegiality. Just as the individual local churches can only exist in *communio* with one another, so too the bishop must live in hierarchical *communio* with the episcopate as a whole and especially with the Bishop of Rome as the centre of unity. Each individual bishop is therefore not only responsible for his local church, but also for the universal Church and its unity.<sup>224</sup>

Kasper has stated that this collegiality is the official outward sign of the sacramental *communio*-unity of the church. A key concept for understanding this *communio*-unity with the other bishops is that of “*communio hierarchica*” (hierarchical communion).<sup>225</sup>

In his work *That They May All Be One*, Kasper argued that this *communio* is not simply a matter of vague feeling, but is rather a legally tangible entity:

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>223</sup> Cardinal Walter Kasper, “Mission of Bishops in the Mystery of the Church: Reflections on the Question of Ordaining Women to Episcopal Office in the Church of England,” June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Section #2. Accessed at <[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20060605\\_kasper-bishops\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/card-kasper-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20060605_kasper-bishops_en.html)>.

<sup>224</sup> Kasper, “Church as *Communio*,” 240.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

In order to express this, the Council employs a neologism, stating that the bishop can exercise the authority which he has received through his consecration only in the '*communio hierarchica*,' in hierarchical communion with the head and members of the college of bishops (LG 21f). The neologism '*communio hierarchica*' gives full expression to the fact that *communio* is not a notional communion but represents a legally tangible entity.<sup>226</sup>

How does Kasper understand this “legally tangible” communion within the college of bishops? He noted in *Theology and Church* that the famous *Nota praevia* appended to *Lumen Gentium* distinguished between episcopal functions (*munera*) and powers (*potestates*). This document taught that while episcopal functions are conferred through consecration, they can only be exercised as powers on the basis of a juridical determination that is dependent on each bishop maintaining hierarchical *communio* with the pope and the whole episcopate.<sup>227</sup>

Kasper criticized the foundation of “hierarchical *communio*” adopted by the Second Vatican Council: “*Communio hierarchica* is therefore a typical compromise formulation, which points to a juxtaposition of sacramental *communio* ecclesiology and juristic unity ecclesiology.... The synthesis brought about by the last council was highly superficial, and in no way satisfactory.”<sup>228</sup> He pointed out that the juridical form of hierarchical *communio* within the college of bishops has varied throughout history. Thus, he wrote in *That They Might Be One*:

Interestingly, the note also adds that the form and manner of this integration occur in accordance with the circumstances of the time, and is thus historically variable. Therefore a distinction is to be made between the essential, and therefore essentially binding, *communio* and its concrete canonistic structure. At the same time this implies that the form of canonical empowerment of bishops by the Pope,

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<sup>226</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 84.

<sup>227</sup> *Theology and Church*, 158.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

which has been customary in the Latin church for so long, is not the only possible way of making this legal determination.<sup>229</sup>

Kasper even went so far as to suggest that the current canonical form of hierarchical *communio* is specific to the Latin church and remains fundamentally capable of change.<sup>230</sup> While Kasper himself did not apply this possibility to the situation of the Protestant and Anglican communities, the idea offers the possibility that the ministries of these communities may be able to establish hierarchical *communio* with the episcopal college in a manner suitable to their own unique situation.

### 6.3 *Apostolic Succession and Tradition*

In “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” Kasper cited Ratzinger in stressing the ecumenical importance of apostolic succession and tradition:

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has gone so far as to call ‘tradition and apostolic succession’ the ‘core question in the Catholic/Protestant debate.’ Accordingly, the broad consensus that has been attained on the sacramentality of ministry will lead further only when we can agree about the apostolic succession in the ministry.<sup>231</sup>

In this final section I shall describe Kasper’s understanding of tradition and apostolic succession and explain how these concepts contribute to his understanding of what constitutes a community as an authentic “church.”

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<sup>229</sup> *That They May All Be One*, 84.

<sup>230</sup> See *ibid.*, 85: “That suggests the view that the concrete juridical form of the hierarchical communion, as it is provided for in the current Latin church (and in a different sense also in the Catholic Eastern churches), represents a legal discipline within the Latin church (and also the Catholic Eastern churches) which should not be canonized as such but remains fundamentally capable of change; in its present concrete form the pope seems to be acting as the head of the Latin church, while in the Eastern churches which are separated from Rome this function is by customary right accorded to the patriarch or metropolitan (together with their synods.)”

<sup>231</sup> “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 114.



Kasper's understanding of tradition draws on the teachings of Johann Adam Möhler and John Henry Newman, both of whom emphasized that tradition is alive and dynamic:

The tradition is however...not a petrified entity; it is a living tradition. It is an event in the Holy Spirit, who according to the promise of the Lord guides the church into all truth (*John 16:13*), again and again elucidating the Gospel which has been handed down once and for all, and granting growth in understanding of the truth which has been revealed once and for all (*Dei verbum [DV]* 8; cf. *DS* 3020). According to the martyr bishop Irenaeus of Lyon it is the spirit of God who keeps the apostolic heritage, handed down once and for all, young and fresh.<sup>232</sup>

Kasper has argued that the transmission of tradition in the church takes many forms, above all through the liturgy, the proclamation of the Word, and the daily lived witness of faith.<sup>233</sup> The transmission of tradition always has its term or end in the contemporary church which, as Kasper described in *Theology and Church*, is the conscious subject of this transmission: "The comprehensive 'we' of the church is the conscious subject of faith and the place of truth. This means that tradition is always a living transmission to what is always the present, where interpretation is the condition of tradition."<sup>234</sup> Citing the experience of Romano Guardini, in which Guardini struggled with the uncertainty of his personal subjective understanding of the truth, Kasper argued that it is this conscious subject, the collective experience of the "we" of the church as passed down by tradition, in which the truth of Jesus Christ takes an objective form.<sup>235</sup> Kasper follows Irenaeus in associating the church as the place of truth with the presence of the Spirit:

According to Irenaeus of Lyons, the church is the precious vessel into which the Holy Spirit has poured the truth in all its youthful freshness, and the place where

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<sup>232</sup> Kasper, "The Decree on Ecumenism," Section #2. See also *Sacrament of Unity*, 146.

<sup>233</sup> *Theology and Church*, 6.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

that freshness is preserved. ‘Where the church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the church and all grace. But the Spirit is truth.’<sup>236</sup>

It is within this understanding of tradition as living and abiding in the subject of the church that Kasper has discussed the significance of apostolic succession. He emphasized that apostolic succession is the “concrete sign that allows us to recognize the tradition and indeed the body of Christ.”<sup>237</sup> Apostolic succession is the concrete form of apostolic tradition and is a sign and instrument of the transmission of the gospel:

The apostolic succession is completely at the service of the apostolic tradition. This is why ordination to the Episcopal office was linked at a very early date to the profession of the creed. We find the apostolic tradition only in the mode of apostolic succession, and the normative substance of this concrete form is the tradition itself. This link between the apostolic tradition and the succession is the consequence of understanding the church and its ministries as a sacrament, i.e., a sign and instrument of salvation: succession in the ministry is understood as a sign and instrument of the *res*, namely, the transmission of the Gospel. Apostolicity in the sense of historical continuity serves to ensure apostolicity in the sense of the substantial identity of the apostolic message.<sup>238</sup>

Kasper also described apostolic succession as the concrete way that Jesus Christ remains with us in the Holy Spirit until the end of time: “It is the concrete form of the *pro nobis* that occurred once and for all. Jesus Christ’s handing over of himself remains present in the handing on of the apostolic tradition, in which and through which he continually hands himself over to us so that he may remain with us always.”<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid., 139. See also page 250 above.

<sup>237</sup> “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 124. Citing Thomas Aquinas, Kasper stated that apostolic succession is a sign in a threefold sense: “As *signum rememorativum*, it is to recall and point backward to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which was handed on once and for all by the apostles; as *signum demonstrativum*, it is to make the inherited Gospel present here and now as a living authority; as *signum prognosticum*, it is to be a prophetic sign and testimony that anticipates the definitive kingdom of God,” *ibid.*, 121-2.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 122.

Kasper further wrote that there is an interplay between tradition, apostolic succession, and communion:

*Successio* cannot be detached from *traditio*. But it is also inseparable from *communio*, as we see in the collaboration of the community in the appointment of its bishop, in the requirement that a new bishop should be ordained by at least three consecrating bishops, and in the ‘letters of communion’ that the new bishop received from his fellow bishops. Since all the bishops who are in the line of apostolic succession share in the one mission in the one Spirit, they form together the one *ordo episcoporum*, in Cyprian’s words, *episcopatus unus atque indivisus* (the episcopate is one and undivided).<sup>240</sup>

Despite Kasper’s depiction of apostolic succession as a sign of the apostolic tradition, Kasper is quite forthright about the possibility that apostolic succession is only a sign and not a guarantee of a community’s continuity with the true apostolic tradition. He wrote, “This link between *traditio*, *successio*, and *communio* does not lead to a mechanical automatism. *Successio* is a sign of the true *traditio*, but not its guarantee. One bishop, or several, can also deny the *traditio* and thus fall away from *communio*.”<sup>241</sup> In fact, the true tradition can even exist apart from the sign of apostolic succession:

The sign of succession does not invariably guarantee the *res*, i.e., the true *traditio*. The church and its theology took longer to perceive that the *res*—the Spirit who guarantees the true *traditio*—can be present even where the sign (whether *successio* or *communio*) is for some reason absent or not fully existent....<sup>242</sup>

Nevertheless, Kasper argued that such exceptional cases should not be turned into the norm. Rather the patristic view that *traditio*, *successio*, and *communio* are essentially interrelated should be the norm.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 124-5.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 126. Further on Kasper wrote: “In specific cases, it is certainly possible for the *successio*, understood as a sign, to part company with the *res* that it designates and attests, namely, the *traditio*; there are no automatic guarantees here,” *ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

Kasper, like Ratzinger, also dispels the notion that apostolic succession is to be understood in terms of an unbroken chain of ordinations stretching back from each contemporary bishop to the apostles themselves.<sup>244</sup> Apostolic succession primarily means that the episcopal college as a whole succeeds and continues the mission of the original apostolic college:

The apostles are commanded to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ before all peoples and in all ages. In other words, their mission extends beyond the lifetime of the first witnesses, and this means that after the death of the first (and primary) witnesses there must be others who will take on this mission and continue it. This is not a succession in the linear sense, where one office-bearer follows another; rather, new members are coopted and integrated into the apostolic college with its mission that is carried on from age to age.<sup>245</sup>

Thus a new bishop enters into the apostolic succession by entering into communion with the whole episcopal body:

When a bishop enters the apostolic succession, he does not receive some private channel (or ‘pipeline’) connecting him to the apostles. Rather, he enters the fellowship of bishops. The individual bishop is a successor of the apostles, not thanks to an unbroken chain going back from his predecessors to one of the apostles, but because he is in communion with the entire *ordo episcoporum*, which as a whole is the successor of the apostolic college and of the apostles’ mission. This is why the mutual agreement of the bishops is a decisive sign of the apostolicity of their teaching. Catholicity is an instrument and expression of apostolicity.<sup>246</sup>

This understanding of apostolic succession is important for the future recognition of Protestant and Anglican ministries and consequently, recognition of their communities as “churches.” It could mean that the recognition of ministries is not a separate pursuit from that of seeking to establish full communion between communities as a whole, as if the

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<sup>244</sup> See for example Kasper, “Church Authority by Ecumenical Consensus?” 6: “This succession, of course, can no longer be envisioned simply as an unbroken chain of laying on of hands in passing on the office of bishop.” See also Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 245-6.

<sup>245</sup> “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 120-1.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

ministries of these communities would have to be “fixed” after the former goal were achieved. Once these communities enter into full fellowship with the Catholic Church, then it is possible that those ministries could likewise enter into full communion with the Catholic episcopal college and through such communion, the historic apostolic succession.<sup>247</sup>

Even though such a restoration of full communion with these communities has not been yet been achieved, Kasper nevertheless acknowledges that there are other signs of continuity with the apostolic witness other than apostolic succession. In his 1974 article “Church Authority by Ecumenical Consensus?” he wrote, “Apostolic succession is one essential sign of the continuity of apostolic witness; only a sign, and only one sign among others, but an essential one.”<sup>248</sup> He noted that in the New Testament there are various forms of passing on church office and that in the early church there are authorized cases of priestly ordination by priests.<sup>249</sup> Citing the work of Yves Congar, Kasper emphasized that apostolic succession originally meant primarily a succession in apostolic faith and love, with succession in the sense of an uninterrupted imposition of hands being no more than a sign that lost its power once the office-holder committed heresy.<sup>250</sup> In “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” he further suggested that both Catholic and Protestant traditions on apostolic succession preserve equally valid concerns and that

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<sup>247</sup> More likely however, is that the full recognition of Protestant and Anglican ministries will involve a lengthy process leading to the joint ordination of bishops. See for example the statement of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran Joint Commission, “Facing Unity: Models, Forms, and Phases of Lutheran-Catholic Church Fellowship,” in *Deepening Communion*, eds. William G. Rusch and Jeffrey Gros (Washington: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1998): 15-71.

<sup>248</sup> Kasper, “Church Authority by Ecumenical Consensus?” 7.

<sup>249</sup> See *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>250</sup> Kasper, “Convergence and Divergence in the Question of Office,” 118.

it has not yet proved possible to achieve a satisfactory theological and institutional synthesis of these two concerns.<sup>251</sup>

Kasper further suggested two ideas that might offer a way forward in recognizing ministries that are outside the historic apostolic succession of bishops. First, he noted that it is possible that the Catholic Church could decide in the future to recognize a different form apostolic succession:

The council consciously avoids saying that only bishops can receive new members into the college of bishops; it refrains from deciding the *quaestio iuris* and the *quaestio facti* on this issue and merely makes the positive affirmation: ‘It is the right of bishops to admit newly elected members into the episcopal body by means of the sacrament of Orders.’ *This at least hints at a possibility that the una sancta could recognize more than one exclusive form and conception of apostolic succession.*<sup>252</sup>

Second, and perhaps most important for the thesis of this dissertation, Kasper suggested that the Catholic Church may recognize traditionally invalid ministries through their spiritual worth and fruitfulness:

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<sup>251</sup> See “The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem,” in *Leadership in the Church*, 139-40: “The primary significance of the apostolic succession in the episcopal ministry—the contribution made by the Catholic Church to full ecclesial fellowship—is as an expression of the fact that the church, even in its apostolicity, is never something purely spiritual or intellectual, but is also a tangible historical reality. The Protestant question about the meaning of such a succession in the tradition has the important function of recalling that a mere succession of office-holders is nothing, unless the entire church follows the faith and the spirit of the apostles. Where the Catholic tradition recalls that the specific church and its teaching have a binding character, the Protestant tradition recalls the critical and innovatory function of Scripture, of the living Gospel. It has not yet proved possible to achieve a satisfactory theological and institutional synthesis of these concerns.”

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 135. Emphasis mine. See also “Convergence and Divergence in the Question of Office,” 118-9, wherein Kasper wrote: “The change from this notion of apostolic succession to that based on rather formal criteria of validity came about as a result of the change of attitude which the Church underwent between the first and second millennia. After the first thousand years or so of the church’s history, interest was no longer centred upon the activity of God made present in the office of the Church. The analytically-minded theologians of the scholastic period were more interested in the inner structure of the sacramental signs, their efficacy and validity. They thus gave more prominence to the task of establishing criteria of validity which could be applied to the Church’s office. The result was a new and epoch-making form, not only of the Church itself, but of its theology and office. We cannot reverse this situation today, but we can ask ourselves whether, as we move from the second into the third millennium, the Church will perhaps not adopt another new an epoch-making form.”

Continuity of the apostolic ministry can no longer be understood in terms of a purely historical linear succession; rather, this continuity is realized ever anew in the Holy Spirit and is received and acknowledged afresh by the church. The event of the Spirit founds the institution ever anew. *When the freedom of the Spirit is acknowledged in this way within the total sacramental structure of the church, it becomes possible in principle to pronounce a spiritual judgment that acknowledges ministries that are invalid according to purely institutional criteria, but that demonstrate their spiritual worth and fruitfulness.*<sup>253</sup>

In summary, Kasper's theology of apostolic succession affirms that succession in episcopal ministry is a sign of continuity with the apostolic tradition, but not necessarily a mechanical guarantee of such continuity. In fact, Kasper is comfortable acknowledging that the reality of the true apostolic tradition may exist apart from the sign of succession that consists in the fellowship of bishops in the episcopal college, although in normal circumstances the triumvirate of tradition, succession and communion should exist together in an integrated whole. Finally, Kasper has made some very positive and hopeful statements about the possibility that the Catholic Church could decide to recognize more than one form of apostolic succession in ministry and that this recognition might possibly be based on the spiritual worth and fruitfulness of a ministry that traditionally has been viewed as invalid according to purely institutional criteria.

## 7. Conclusion

I stated above that my aim was to show that Kasper's emphasis on the role of the Spirit in enabling Protestant and Anglican communities to be communities of salvation provides a possible theological rationale for designating them as "churches." While Kasper himself does not argue in this way, much in his theology can be interpreted as

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<sup>253</sup> "The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem," in *Leadership in the Church*, 141. Emphasis mine.

supporting the idea that Protestant and Anglican communities could be recognized as “churches” in the theological sense. While they may not have the fullness of ecclesiality according to the Catholic understanding, at the very least those Protestant and Anglican communities who are engaged in ongoing ecumenical dialogue with the Catholic Church could be recognized as “churches” in the theological sense. In Chapter Five I shall attempt to describe a standard for recognizing a non-Catholic Christian community as a “church” based on the concept of “ecclesial fruitfulness.” Here I simply review Kasper’s contribution (albeit indirectly) to an argument that could be made for recognizing some Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches” in the theological sense.

First, both Ratzinger and Kasper have argued that Protestant communities are not “churches” in the theological sense because they have a different self-understanding, namely that they are a “creature of the Word.” However, I have tried to show that Kasper has recognized that such an ecclesial self-understanding is not contradictory, but merely complementary to a more traditional Catholic understanding of the church as a sacrament of grace. Furthermore, Kasper has also emphasized that the fruit of ecumenical dialogue with these communities shows how much Protestant and Anglican communities share in faith with the Catholic Church. He makes clear that what is shared in faith is greater than what divides the churches. In fact, Kasper argues that what is shared is “the core, the foundation, and the ultimate goal of the Christian faith.” Such admissions make it increasingly difficult to argue that the remaining differences in faith and ecclesial self-understanding are so significant that the Catholic Church should consider the ecclesiality



of Protestant and Anglican communities so fundamentally different that they are not “churches” in the theological sense.

Second, Kasper’s understanding of “church” as the public place of the Spirit who is the effective and vivifying presence of the risen Christ offers a solid theological foundation for developing a standard of “church” that is centered on the recognition of certain public signs in the Christian community which point to the active and effective presence of the Spirit of Christ in its midst. Kasper further argues that the sole purpose of both the sacraments and offices of the church is to transmit and effectively realize in the Spirit the salvation given through Jesus Christ. These statements suggest that the reality and essence of ecclesiality, of what it means to be “church,” could be discerned through observing the effective and loving presence of the Spirit in a Christian community’s sacraments (especially the Eucharist), institutions and ecclesial life. Kasper has aptly stated that we must not mistake the absence of certain signs of life as meaning the Spirit-effected salvation given through Jesus Christ is not present. His pneumatological and soteriological ecclesiology therefore is quite amenable to a positive judgment regarding the ecclesiality of a community based on the effective and loving presence of the Spirit within its midst.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ECCLESIAL FRUITFULNESS AS A STANDARD FOR CHURCH

In this chapter I shall present “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for evaluating whether certain non-Catholic Christian communities can be considered “churches” in the theological sense. Before elaborating a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” and evaluating its application to Protestant and Anglican communities, I shall first describe and clarify some theological issues raised in the first four chapters regarding the idea of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.” This chapter will then develop a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” by drawing upon the theologies of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper as expounded in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. It will conclude with an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of both Ratzinger’s and Kasper’s theologies and raise the question of whether Protestant and Anglican communities could be understood as “churches” in the theological sense using “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.”

1. *“Ecclesial Fruitfulness” as New Approach for Recognizing “Church”*

Several Catholic theologians have noted that the Catholic Church’s judgment that Protestant and Anglican communities are “not churches in the proper sense of the word” fails to do justice to the ecclesial reality of these communities.<sup>1</sup> The need, therefore, for a more satisfactory evaluation of the ecclesiality of these communities suggests that the Catholic Church needs a more robust set of criteria for identifying the genuine presence of the church in a particular Christian community. My proposal of “ecclesial fruitfulness” is intended to serve primarily the function of identifying and recognizing the presence of

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<sup>1</sup> See the sub-section in Chapter Two, “*Criticism of the Catholic Church’s Criterion for Identifying ‘Church,’*” 123-29.

the church of Christ in a non-Catholic Christian community with a degree of certainty that has not been possible up to now in Catholic theology.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I observed that using “fruitfulness” as a sign to discern the presence of a particular underlying reality has a scriptural foundation. In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, Jesus teaches his disciples how to discern false prophets from true ones:

By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them. (Mt. 7:16-20 NAB).

Here Jesus teaches his disciples that a prophet’s authenticity may be recognized not through an investigation into the circumstances or nature of the prophet’s call but simply through the “fruitfulness” of the words and actions of the prophet. An authentic prophet of God will produce words and actions consistent with a genuine calling from God. Thus it is sufficient to judge and recognize a prophet according to the presence or absence of such “fruits.”

When applying such a scriptural text to ecclesiology, the crucial question that must be answered in order for “ecclesial fruitfulness” to become a practical criterion for identifying “church,” is, “What does ‘fruitfulness’ mean when speaking of the church?” I suggest that “ecclesial fruitfulness” means the Spirit’s effectiveness in realizing the mystery of God’s salvation given in Jesus Christ (understood as an ongoing transformation of those in the community from lives of egoism to lives characterized by an unselfish love for God and neighbor) through the community’s proclamation of God’s

Word, the celebration of the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist), and through fostering communion with other churches and ecclesial communities. A Christian community in which the Spirit is active in this way is therefore “ecclesially fruitful” and as such merits the designation of “church.”

The main advantage of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church,” when compared with the Catholic Church’s existing standard (based solely upon whether a Christian community possesses valid sacramental orders and therefore has the genuine and integral presence of the eucharistic mystery), is that “church” is no longer measured according to whether a Christian community simply *possesses* an intermediate reality such as apostolic succession or the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> This dissertation has tried to demonstrate that the ultimate end of the church is not merely the possession of valid orders or even the sacramental real presence of Christ. Rather, such realities, however crucial they may be for understanding a community’s ecclesiality, have been instituted as means of salvation that are ordered toward a greater end. Explicitly equating “church” with the *possession* of these intermediate realities, therefore, can be problematic, as both Catholic and non-Catholic theologians have noted.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, it becomes difficult to fully appreciate the ecclesial reality of Christian communities in which the Spirit is effective in realizing the mystery of God’s salvation (in the specific sense described above) even though they might not possess the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery on account of a *defectus ordinis*. On the

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<sup>2</sup> See Luigi Sartori, “‘*Subsistit in*’ Criterion of ‘Truth and History’ in Interreligious Dialogue,” in *In Many and Diverse Ways: In Honor of Jacques Dupuis*, eds. Daniel Kendall, Gerald O’Collins and Jacques Dupuis (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003): 89.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Two, 126-29.

other hand, it also fails to account for the fact that Catholic communities themselves do not always effectively realize the mystery of God's salvation *despite* having the fullness of these means of salvation. It is possible, therefore, that "ecclesial fruitfulness" as a standard for identifying "church" could not only prove to be a more accurate measure of ecclesiality but it could be a more flexible criterion for recognizing a greater variety of Christian communities as "churches" in the theological sense.

2. *A Soteriological and Existential Standard for "Church"*

I suggested above that using "ecclesial fruitfulness" as a way to identify "church" means evaluating whether the Spirit is effective in realizing the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ through the community's proclamation of God's Word, the celebration of the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist), and through fostering communion with other churches and ecclesial communities. As such, the standard for "church" I present here has a soteriological dimension, insofar as "church" is defined as a Christian community in which the Spirit is effective in realizing the mystery of God's salvation. In practical theological terms, non-Catholic Christian communities could, on this soteriological basis, be separated into "churches" and "non-churches" according to the degree to which such communities share with the Catholic Church a common interpretation of the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ. Any non-Catholic Christian community that has a fundamentally different understanding of the mystery of God's salvation in Jesus Christ would be something theologically distinct from a "church."

In addition, Christian communities also must have a common *existential* way of realizing the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ. Thus, it is not sufficient for a community to merely uphold and practice some key Christian beliefs, such as bringing about the reign of God through loving and serving one's neighbor, but a Christian community must relate to God, to other Christian communities, and the world in a way that is recognizable to the Catholic Church as genuinely "ecclesial."<sup>4</sup> A Christian community that is fruitful in bringing about in its members an unselfish love for God and neighbor, but that does not have an ecclesial life that is existentially compatible with Catholic ecclesial life, cannot be a "church" in the theological sense. For example, if a Christian community works to realize the reign of God in the world but does not practice baptism, celebrate the Eucharist, gather to hear the Word of God, or considers itself quite independent from other Christian communities and churches, then such a community is again something distinct from a "church" in the theological sense, as it is not existentially relating to God, to other Christian communities, or to the world in a way that the Catholic Church can recognize as genuinely "ecclesial." This existential dimension of the standard for "church" which I am proposing here attempts to preserve the Catholic understanding of "church" as essentially a eucharistic assembly that is in a relationship with all other eucharistic assemblies while not limiting the idea of "church" simply to those communities possessing a valid Eucharist.

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<sup>4</sup> See John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press): 244: "The first and fundamental consequence of the method of looking at the community first and then at the criteria is that the recognition of ministries becomes in fact a *recognition of communities* in an existential sense. Thus one's primary question in facing another ministry would be a question concerning *the entire structure of the community* to which it belongs. When we say 'structure' we do not mean a certain institution as such but the way in which a community relates itself to God, to the world and to the other communities...."

As I suggested in the introduction to this dissertation, the Protestant and Anglican communities who may be most worthy of the designation of “church” when using a standard of “ecclesial fruitfulness” are those communities in which the Catholic Church, through extensive ecumenical dialogue, already recognizes a substantially similar ecclesial self-understanding. Protestant communities which belongs to the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, as well as the Anglican Church, are Christian communities who celebrate the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, preach the Word of God, and possess a special ordained ministry. As major ecumenical partners with the Catholic Church, it is also clear that these communities desire to establish ties of communion with other Christian communities and churches. In addition, many of these Christian communities even have an episcopal ministry. These common ecclesial “fruits” are positive signs that such Christian communities approach the standard of “church” proposed in its existential dimension. Furthermore, the fact that the Catholic Church has also recognized through ecumenical dialogue that these Christian communities share a substantially similar faith regarding the mystery of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ means that these communities possess the proper soteriological dimension necessary to be “church.”<sup>5</sup> In comparison, other Christian communities, such as the Society of Friends (the Quakers), though they may work admirably to realize the reign of God in this world and produce many ecclesial “fruits” in their communities, are existentially farther from the standard of church

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<sup>5</sup> See Walter Kasper, *Harvesting the Fruits: Basic Aspects of Christian Faith in Ecumenical Dialogue* (London: Continuum, 2009): 27-8.



proposed here since they do not celebrate the sacraments of the Eucharist or Baptism through a special sacramental ministry.

3. *Difficulties for “Ecclesial Fruitfulness” as a Standard for “Church”*

A final question to consider is how using “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church” could overcome the theological difficulties raised when applied to a Protestant or Anglican community which has, according to official Catholic teaching, an invalid Eucharist because of a *defectus ordinis* and is therefore on that basis not considered to be a “church” in the theological sense. I suggest that there are two fundamental approaches for overcoming such a concern. A first approach would be to use the “ecclesial fruitfulness” of a Christian community as an argument for the validity of that community’s Eucharist and sacramental orders, and on that basis, arrive at a judgment that such a community is a “church” in the theological sense. As a means of recognizing ecclesiality, “ecclesial fruitfulness” would then be a complementary method to the traditional Catholic standard for evaluating which Christian communities are “churches.” It would provide an additional warrant for the genuine sacramental reality of the Eucharist in these communities that may not be otherwise available. A second approach for using “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for church would be to argue that *despite* a Christian community’s invalid Eucharist and ministry, such a community is a “church” in the theological sense because of its “ecclesial fruitfulness.”

Each approach to “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church” has its own possibilities as well as its difficulties. An advantage of the first approach is that it is completely compatible with what the traditional standard means by “church”: it is a

Christian community that celebrates a valid Eucharist. Another advantage is that this approach preserves the unique place of the Eucharist in constituting “church,” insofar as the unique power and spiritual dignity of the Eucharist continues to be required to constitute a community as a “church.” This approach also offers a possible solution to some of the most difficult ecumenical problems that remain with Protestant and Anglican communities, namely, the full recognition of their Eucharist and ministry despite traditional Catholic misgivings about the interruption of apostolic succession in these communities. Despite these possibilities, however, this approach may be perhaps the more difficult of the two to completely reconcile with Catholic teaching, given the Catholic requirement of the necessity of episcopal succession for the valid celebration of the Eucharist.

But what is the first approach’s difficulty is possibly the second approach’s main strength. Certain recent statements of the CDF strongly suggest that a valid Eucharist is absolutely required for a Christian community to be considered a “church.” However, as I noted in Chapter Two, some theologians believe Vatican II intended to leave open the question of whether communities without a valid Eucharist could be considered a “church” in the theological sense. The second approach, therefore, is arguably compatible with the ecclesiology of Vatican II. Another possibility of this second approach toward “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church” is that it opens up the question of what it means to be “church” beyond what could be considered the narrow confines of eucharistic validity by promoting a wider ecclesiological horizon for examining what it means to be “church.” Yet this possibility also presents a theological

difficulty, given that a Christian community possibly could be recognized as a “church” despite having an invalid Eucharist. If such an approach to “ecclesial fruitfulness” means that a Christian community can be “church” despite having an invalid Eucharist, would this not relativize the importance of those aspects of the Eucharist that are traditionally attached to the validity of the Eucharist, namely, the real presence of Christ and the reality of the eucharistic sacrifice? If “ecclesial fruitfulness” can be found in Christian communities lacking these aspects of the Eucharist, do they not lose some of their significance for understanding “church”? Is not “church” as essentially a eucharistic assembly brought into question?

The solution I would recommend attempts to take the positives of both approaches while avoiding some of the major difficulties of each. I propose using the idea of “ecclesial fruitfulness” to reinterpret the notion of sacramental “validity” in terms of how effective or “fruitful” a sacrament is in accomplishing its intended aim. Thus, the approach to “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church” described here requires, like the first approach described above, a “valid” Eucharist celebrated by a “validly” ordained minister. However, unlike the first approach, I do not suggest that the Eucharist of Protestant and Anglican communities is valid in the sense that they *necessarily* bring about the real presence and sacrifice of Christ in terms described by the Council of Trent. Nor shall I maintain that the “ecclesial fruitfulness” of these communities demonstrates that they have preserved the historic apostolic succession in the traditional sense. Rather, as in the second approach, I merely propose that these communities are “ecclesially fruitful” and hence are “churches” if the celebration of the Eucharist in these

communities (and the ministry through which it is celebrated) is “fruitful” or effective in bringing about the ultimate reality for which the Eucharist is intended, namely the unity of the church that is built up through the ongoing transformation of those in the community from lives of egoism to lives characterized by an unselfish love for God and neighbor. Only in this sense would a Christian community’s fruitfulness “validate” its Eucharist and sacramental orders and thereby meet the standard of “church” proposed here.

In summary, this dissertation proposes “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for recognizing as “churches” those Protestant and Anglican communities that have been in substantial ecumenical dialogue with the Catholic Church for many years. “Ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church” means that those communities in which the Spirit is effective in realizing the mystery of God’s salvation given in Jesus Christ through the community’s proclamation of God’s Word, the celebration of the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist), and through fostering communion with other churches, are “churches” in the theological sense. Such a standard for “church” has two important dimensions. Because a Christian community must be effective in realizing the mystery of God’s salvation, “ecclesial fruitfulness” has a soteriological dimension. Furthermore, since it must effectively realize this salvation in a way that is recognizable to the Catholic Church as genuinely “ecclesial,” this standard also has an existential dimension. In the following section I shall explore a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” that seeks to “validate” a community’s Eucharist and ministry according to the degree it is fruitful and effective in bringing about the ultimate reality for which the celebration of the Eucharist is directed,

namely the building up of the unity of the church through the ongoing transformation of those in the community from lives of egoism to lives characterized by an unselfish love for God and neighbor. The “validity” of Protestant and Anglican Eucharist and ministry in this sense does not necessarily mean that the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery is preserved in its fullness in these communities, nor does it imply that these communities still do not suffer from a *defectus ordinis* in their ministry. It does mean, however, that these communities have preserved the basic form of the Eucharist and the sacrament of order.

#### 4. *A Theology of Ecclesial Fruitfulness*

In developing a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness,” I draw particularly on those insights of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper which contribute to such a theology, as well as various insights from the theologians cited in Chapter Two. After elaborating on some of their common fundamental theological and ecclesiological insights, I shall elucidate a theological approach to “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.”

##### 4.1 *Theological Foundations for “Ecclesial Fruitfulness”*

If “ecclesial fruitfulness” is to be a theologically credible concept, it is important to show how it arises from and is connected to other areas of systematic theology. In this section I shall draw on both Ratzinger and Kasper to illustrate how the fruitfulness of the church flows from the fruitfulness of God, who is the Spirit, and who also is the medium by which the fruitfulness of the risen Christ reaches us ecclesially in the proclamation of the Word, in the sacramental life of the church and in the communion of the universal

church. “Ecclesial fruitfulness,” therefore, is rooted in the mystery of God’s salvation as revealed to us in Jesus Christ.

What then is the fruitfulness of *God*? As Ratzinger has noted, profession of faith in one God as a trinity of persons implies the relatedness, the communicability and the fruitfulness of God.<sup>6</sup> God is one precisely in the fruitfulness that is the mutual movement of love between the Father and Son. Father and Son are one inasmuch as their love is fruitful and goes beyond them.<sup>7</sup> Stated more philosophically, absolute being exists not as substance but as subject, and exists only in emptying itself to what is other than itself. It is characteristic of love to find itself in the other, to empty itself in another. As Hegel said, “Love is a distinguishing of two who, absolutely speaking, are not distinct.”<sup>8</sup> The unity of Father and Son, therefore, is “perichoretic” insofar as it is a unity that “is an eternal dynamic interchange and interpenetration of Spirit and Spirit, of love and love.”<sup>9</sup> The Spirit *is* this unity of love between Father and Son in person. Hence, the Spirit is the fruitfulness of God insofar as the Spirit *is* the overflowing and abundant self-giving and self-emptying love between Father and Son.<sup>10</sup> Put another way, the Spirit is the fruitfulness of God because the Spirit is the surplus and effusion of freedom in love between Father and Son.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J. R. Foster and Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004): 179-80.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ: Mediations on God in the Trinity*, trans. Robert J. Cunningham (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979): 28.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (London: Burns & Oates, 1977; New York: Paulist Press, 1976): 182.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, “The Pastoral Implications of Episcopal Collegiality,” in *The Church and Mankind*, Concilium 1, eds. Karl Rahner and Edward Schillebeeckx, (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965): 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 250. See also *ibid.*, 258.

Because the Spirit of God is fruitful in the sense of an effusive freedom in love, this fruitfulness overflows the boundaries of God's self. As a love that is utterly free and yet indescribably abundant, the Spirit of God is both the possibility and reality of God's being outside of himself.<sup>12</sup> Thus the Spirit, as the fruitfulness of God, is also the ecstasy of God, God as pure abundance, the overflow of God's love and grace.<sup>13</sup> As Kasper said, "This loving streaming-out-beyond occurs not in the form of a necessary streaming-out but in the personal manner of voluntary sharing and free, gracious self-communication. In the Spirit, God has, as it were, the possibility of being himself by emptying or divesting himself."<sup>14</sup> The Spirit, therefore, is both the inner fruitfulness of God—God as pure, abundant and overflowing love—and also the condition and possibility of God self-communicating this ecstatic love in history.

The Spirit, as the fruitfulness of God, is therefore the source of all creation because, as Kasper has said, creation is "the outflow of God's love and a participation in God's being."<sup>15</sup> This understanding of the Spirit as the foundation and origin of all created reality has implications for its ultimate purpose. Because the world originates in love, so also then is the world ordered towards fulfillment in love. This implies that the fruits of love will endure forever: "Wherever, then, love 'occurs,' there too the definitive meaning of all reality is realized in an anticipatory way and there too the reign of God has come, even if only in a fragmentary and provisional manner."<sup>16</sup> In this understanding of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Crossroad, 1984): 226. See also *ibid.*, 308.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 156-7.

creation the destiny of humankind is to be drawn up into the fruitfulness of the trinitarian God through a transformation of sinful individuality into an existence of openness and love. Such love unites us to God in a “communion of wills” and through such a union with God we are united with one another. This unity with God and one another is the way in which the fruitfulness of God is made manifest in human beings.<sup>17</sup>

How then is the unity of human beings with God and one another made possible in history? As Kasper has described, it is the Word of God who reveals the mystery of God’s love for humankind. In doing so, it is a fruitful and creative Word, an event of power, grace, life and salvation. The revelation of God’s Word is more than a message; it is the personal self-communication of God to human beings. Jesus Christ, as the Word of God incarnate, is God’s self-communicating love in person, God’s loving reign, and the meaning of all reality.<sup>18</sup> Jesus was, in the power of the Spirit, a mold and receptacle for God’s self-communication.<sup>19</sup>

It is only in the death and resurrection of Christ, however, that what constitutes humanity’s deepest nature reaches its unique and supreme realization: the fruitfulness of love surpassing itself and emptying itself. As Ratzinger noted, in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, Jesus transforms his death into an act of prayer, and this prayer is subsumed into the fruitfulness of eternal love and dialogue within the Trinity.<sup>20</sup> Through this

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<sup>17</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatious Press, 1996): 37. See also Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritatis Est* #17.

<sup>18</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 252. See also *ibid.*, 230. See also Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 171. See also, *ibid.*, 156-7. See also Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church*, trans. Margaret Kohl (New York: Crossroad, 1989): 26.

<sup>19</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 267.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000): 48-9.



inclusion of the prayer of Jesus in the fruitfulness of the triune God, the whole of human existence is vicariously taken up into the transformation of love that Jesus effects on the cross, thereby allowing humanity to participate in this divine fruitfulness.<sup>21</sup> In Christ's obedience even unto death, the Spirit is thereby liberated in order to become "the medium and the force in which Jesus Christ as the new Lord of the world is accessible to us."<sup>22</sup> In the resurrection Christ becomes, through the Spirit, fruitful or "communicable" to those beyond his historical and bodily existence. The Spirit, who is the fruitfulness of God in the world, proceeds from the crucified Lord as water flows from a spring: "Christ is the spring of living water (John 4&7)—the crucified Lord is the spring that makes the world fruitful. The source of the Spirit is the crucified Christ."<sup>23</sup> Thus the risen Christ is fruitful through giving of himself in the Spirit, and this ability to give of himself through the centuries is a "fruit" of the cross. As Ratzinger once exhorted: "So let us be ready to hear the call of Jesus Christ, who achieved the great success of God on the Cross; he who, as the grain of wheat that died, has become fruitful down through the centuries; the Tree of Life, in whom even today men may put their hope."<sup>24</sup>

The church, therefore, is to serve as a sign and icon of the Spirit of the risen Christ, who is the fruitfulness of God in and to the world. The "fruitfulness" of the church is thus the Spirit effectively realizing the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>22</sup> Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 256.

<sup>23</sup> Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 47. See also Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ*, 104: "The mystery of the Trinity is translated in the world into the mystery of the cross; and in it is found the fruitfulness from which the Holy Spirit proceeds."

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *God is Near Us*, eds. Stefan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003): 40-1.

(particularly the Eucharist), and through fostering communion among all local churches and ecclesial communities. In the church's preaching of the Word, the Spirit works through the event of God's Word to make manifest God's love for the world, to bring about true Christian freedom, which turns people away from egoism toward a profoundly unselfish love for God and neighbor. Such love is the supreme gift and fruit of the Holy Spirit, and is the means through which the reign of God is realized in history. This love is especially fruitful in the celebration of the Eucharist, which is itself an "embodied" word, in which the presence of Christ's person and work is sacramentally mediated through remembrance in word and act, in thanksgiving and praise. It is the eucharistic community's prayer to the Spirit, and the Spirit's answer to that prayer, which makes the Eucharist effective and fruitful in bringing about God's work of salvation.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, it is through the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist that persons are adopted into the community of Christ's body in which people are truly able to benefit from the "fruitfulness" or "communicability" of the Spirit of the risen Lord. Celebrating the Eucharist is therefore the concrete way in which persons enter into communion with the triune God, thereby creating and fostering communion with one another and thus further manifesting the fruitfulness of the church as a communion of communions.<sup>26</sup>

In summary, the Spirit is both the inner fruitfulness of God—God as pure, abundant and overflowing love—and also the condition and possibility of God self-

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<sup>25</sup> Walter Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity – The Eucharist and the Church*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad, 2004): 101. See also Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 186.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to a Spiritual Christology*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986): 30. See also Joseph Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church*, trans. Salvator Attanasio and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985): 47.

communicating this ecstatic love in history. Creation is, therefore, the outflow of God's love and a participation in God's being. As the world originates in love, so also then is the world ordered towards fulfillment in love. The salvation of humankind is to be drawn up into the fruitfulness of the trinitarian God through a transformation of sinful individuality into an existence of openness and love. This is made possible in Jesus Christ, who is God's self-communicating love in person, God's loving reign, and the meaning of all reality. In Christ's death and resurrection, he becomes fruitful or "communicable" through giving of himself in the Spirit, and this ability to give of himself through the centuries is itself a fruit of the Paschal Mystery. The church is to serve as a sign and icon of the Spirit of the risen Christ, who is the fruitfulness of God in and to the world. The "fruitfulness" of the church therefore is the Spirit effectively realizing the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ. This occurs through the preaching of the Word, the celebration of the sacraments (particularly the Eucharist), and through creating and fostering communion among all local churches and ecclesial communities. I suggest that a Christian community that is "ecclesially fruitful" in the sense described is theologically a "church."

#### 4.2 *"Ecclesial Fruitfulness" as "Eucharistic Fruitfulness"*

I suggested above that there are two fundamental ways to approach using "ecclesial fruitfulness" as a method for recognizing "church." The approach described here attempts a *via media* between the two, and uses "ecclesial fruitfulness" as way to "validate" a Christian community's Eucharist and ministry based on their effectiveness in creating a community whose members are characterized by an unselfish love for God and

neighbor. Understanding validity in this way would not necessarily resolve any traditional Catholic misgivings about the *defectus ordinis* in the sacramental orders of Protestant and Anglican communities or the Catholic belief that such communities have not preserved the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery. Rather this approach to “ecclesial fruitfulness” will attempt to reinterpret the very meaning of “validity” itself. I realize that I am proposing here an understanding of validity that departs from the “ritual validity” that Kilian McDonnell has described as standard in Catholic ecclesiology today.<sup>27</sup> The understanding of sacramental validity I am proposing would, like “ecclesial fruitfulness” itself, be based on whether the sacrament, as a sign that effects what it signifies, is fruitful in transforming those in the community from lives of egoism to lives characterized by an unselfish love for God and neighbor. In other words, if a sacrament effectively conveys those realities for which it was instituted, and the sign aspect of the sacrament is not so distorted as to critically dampen the fruitfulness of the sacrament, then such a sacrament is substantially “valid.” As McDonnell said, “That form of ministry is good and acceptable which realizes that which Christ meant his church to be.”<sup>28</sup> I would extend this principle to validating all the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. A sacrament is “fruitful” if it effectively realizes that which Christ meant his church to be. In the remainder of this section, I hope to show how, for this approach, the sacraments of the Eucharist and holy orders could be considered “valid” using the standard of “ecclesial fruitfulness” in which the sacramental actions of the church, like

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<sup>27</sup> Kilian McDonnell, “Ways of Validating Ministry,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 7 (1970): 217.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 257-8.

the church itself, are effective means of the Spirit in realizing the mystery of God's salvation given in Jesus Christ.

In order to define the fruitfulness of the Eucharist, one must first understand the goal and purpose for which it was instituted. As Kasper has noted, the essential reality of the Eucharist transcends the aspect of real presence of Christ, which (as St. Thomas and St Bonaventure taught) is but an intermediate reality of the sacrament.<sup>29</sup> Rather the Eucharist is directed precisely towards the goal and aim of communion in and with Jesus Christ, with the result that the unity of the church is built up. The unity of the church is the reason why the Eucharist exists and its celebration brings about and effects the purification, maturing and deepening of the unity of those Christians who share in the common faith and baptism.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, the celebration of the Eucharist in particular is the preeminent sign to the world of God's unifying and fruitful love.<sup>31</sup> Given this primary purpose of the Eucharist, the principal "fruit" of its celebration is that it should produce a transformative effect in the community and in its member's lives. As Kasper says, "The principal thing [in the celebration of the Eucharist] is that the transformation of the bread and the wine should continue in the transformation of our lives...."<sup>32</sup> Hence the Eucharist is only fruitful and meaningful when it actually arouses faith, hope, and

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<sup>29</sup> Walter Kasper, *That They May All Be One. The Call to Unity* (London-New York: Burns & Oates, 2004): 57. See also Walter Kasper, "Episcopal Office," in *Leadership in the Church – How the Traditional Roles can Serve the Christian Community Today*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad, 2003): 104.

<sup>30</sup> Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity*, 109.

<sup>31</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, "Commentary on Article 26 of the Constitution on the Church," in *Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, ed. Peter Foote et al. (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969): 57.

<sup>32</sup> Walter Kasper, *God's Time for Mankind: Reflections on the Church Year*, trans. John Griffiths (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1984): 45.

love in the hearts of those who celebrate it.<sup>33</sup> Because the purpose and fruit of the Eucharist is to deepen communion in and with Christ and in doing so build up the unity of the church, “eucharistic fruitfulness” is a primary measure of “ecclesial fruitfulness.” I suggest therefore that the reality of a community’s Eucharist, and hence its “ecclesial fruitfulness,” should be recognized if it is able to effect a fruitful transformation in the lives of those who continually celebrate it. On the other hand, if the ongoing transformation of people’s lives is the principal fruit of the Eucharist, and if such a transformation fails to occur in those who regularly partake of it, then is not the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery lacking in a more profound manner than when the eucharistic celebration objectively has the real presence of Christ but its celebration is continually ineffective in changing people’s lives?

What exactly happens in the Eucharist to foster or enable such a transformation? What is the “mechanism” or “channel”<sup>34</sup> in the sacrament that allows such a transformation to occur? I suggest, following both Ratzinger and Kasper, that it is the memorial of Christ’s sacrifice in the eucharistic celebration that serves as this mechanism. Ratzinger has said that historically “the great prayer of praise” that contained as its center the very words of Jesus was for early Christians the essential reality of the Last Supper.<sup>35</sup> As Kasper has said, the basic form of the Eucharist is the

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<sup>33</sup> Walter Kasper, *Faith and the Future* (New York: Crossroad, 1982): 74.

<sup>34</sup> Ratzinger speaks of the Eucharist serving as such a “channel” from the risen Lord to his people in Joseph Ratzinger, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*, ed. Stephan Otto Horn and Vinzenz Pfnür, trans. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005): 122.

<sup>35</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches*, ed. John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007): 72.

offering of the gifts in thanksgiving and praise.<sup>36</sup> The primal meaning, therefore, of the eucharistic celebration, that which truly brings about the reality of Christ's sacrifice in the celebrating community, is the "glorification, adoration, praise and exaltation of God in the remembrance of his mighty acts."<sup>37</sup> It is the Spirit's answer to this prayer of thanksgiving and praise that makes the words and acts of the eucharistic memorial fruitful in the lives of the celebrating community.<sup>38</sup>

But how does the Spirit make the words and acts of the eucharistic memorial fruitful in transforming the lives of those who celebrate it? Such a question is made clear through a further consideration of how the eucharistic prayer makes real the one sacrifice of Christ. As Ratzinger has noted, at the Last Supper, Jesus transformed his death into a verbal form of prayer, thereby enabling his death to be present throughout the centuries in the prayer that is spoken:

The Roman Canon...is the direct descendant and continuation of this prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper and is thereby the heart of the Eucharist. It is the genuine vehicle of the sacrifice, since thereby Jesus Christ transformed his death into verbal form—into a prayer—and, in so doing, changed the world. As a result, this death is able to be present for us, because it continues to live in the prayer, and the prayer runs right down through the centuries. A further consequence is that we can share in this death, because we can participate in this transforming prayer, can join in praying it. This, then is the new sacrifice he has given us, in which he includes us all: Because he turned death into a proclamation of thanksgiving and love, he is now able to be present down through all ages as the wellspring of life, and we can enter into him by praying with him.<sup>39</sup>

Hence it is in the praying of the eucharistic prayer that the fruits of Christ's sacrifice, living in history as a proclamation of thanksgiving and love, is received and made fruitful

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<sup>36</sup> Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 185.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity*, 101. See also Kasper, *Theology and Church*, 186.

<sup>39</sup> Ratzinger, *God is Near Us*, 49-50.

in the lives of those communicating. It is in the eucharistic prayer that Christ's sacrifice, understood in terms of a sacrifice that consists in an existential transformation into self-giving love, is appropriated as the assembly's own sacrifice:

Therefore the sacrifice is effective where *his* word is heard, the word of the Word, by which he transformed his death into an event of meaning and of love, in order that we, through being able to take up his words for ourselves, are led onward into his love, onward into the love of the Trinity, in which he eternally hands himself over to the Father. There, where the words of the Word ring forth, and our gifts thus become his gifts, through which he gives himself, *that* is the sacrificial element that has ever and always been characteristic of the Eucharist.<sup>40</sup>

If, as it was stated above, it is the *Spirit's* answer to the eucharistic prayer that makes memorial of Christ's sacrifice fruitful and effective, then it is natural to raise the question of how one can discern whether the Spirit answers a eucharistic prayer made by an ordained minister in a Protestant or Anglican community who may have a *defectus ordinis*. I would suggest that, unless we wish to make presumptions about how the Spirit may respond to such prayers, it only makes sense to discern the response of the Spirit to such eucharistic prayers through their fruitfulness or effectiveness. Thus, as Kasper noted, the criterion of traditionally valid orders can no longer be the only one in judging whether a ministry is 'valid':

Continuity of the apostolic ministry can no longer be understood in terms of a purely historical linear succession; rather, this continuity is realized ever anew in the Holy Spirit and is received and acknowledged afresh by the church. The event of the Spirit founds the institution ever anew. When the freedom of the Spirit is acknowledged in this way within the total sacramental structure of the church, it becomes possible in principle to pronounce a spiritual judgment that acknowledges ministries that are invalid according to purely institutional criteria, but that demonstrate their spiritual worth and fruitfulness.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 66-7. Emphasis original.

<sup>41</sup> Kasper, "The Apostolic Succession: An Ecumenical Problem," in *Leadership in the Church*, 141.



Moreover, as I noted above in Chapter Two it makes more sense to validate ministry not on isolated criteria such as “faith” or “apostolic succession” but rather through an existential recognition of the community.<sup>42</sup> Validating ministry through an existential examination of how a community relates to God, the world and other communities is something that several notable theologians have advocated. Thus Francis Sullivan wrote, “One can hardly recognize the authentic Christian life of another community without forming a positive judgment about the ordained ministry that nurtured and fostered that life.”<sup>43</sup> Susan Wood also advocated that recognition of ministries should come through recognition of a community’s beliefs and sacramental life.<sup>44</sup> Finally, J.M.R. Tillard argued that the validity of a community’s ministry should be ascertained only through asking whether one recognizes in the community the essential features of the apostolic community as understood and explained by the great Tradition.<sup>45</sup>

In summary, if I ask again, of what does the *ultimate* reality of the eucharistic sacrifice and eucharistic real presence consist? What “validates” a eucharistic celebration as “fruitful” in effectively accomplishing its intended aim and purpose, namely conforming those who celebrate the Eucharist to Christ so as to build up the unity of the church? The answer would be that validity consists of the power of the eucharistic celebration to transform existentially those who celebrate it into persons who are characterized by faith, hope, and self-giving love. Such persons live from an attitude of thanksgiving, praise and delight in the exultation and adoration of God. This is the basic

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<sup>42</sup> Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 244.

<sup>43</sup> Francis A. Sullivan, *From Apostles to Bishops: The Development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: The Newman Press, 2001): 236.

<sup>44</sup> Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000): 78.

<sup>45</sup> J.M.R. Tillard, “Recognition of Ministries: What is the Real Question?” *One in Christ* 21 (1985): 32.

form of the Eucharist. The more each eucharistic assembly effectively grows in communion with Christ in this way, the more the unity of the church is organically built up and the *res* of the Eucharist, as well as the church itself, is made real in the community. Furthermore, it is through “validating” a community’s Eucharist in this way that a similar judgment about the “validity” of a community’s ministry may be made. If a eucharistic assembly effectively realizes in the Spirit the mystery of God’s salvation given in Jesus Christ, and does so in a way that the Catholic Church recognizes as genuinely “ecclesial,” then not only the community itself, but the ministry of that community, which serves and fosters such ecclesial life, should be judged “valid” in the sense described above. Finally, such a conclusion does not mean that traditional Catholic misgivings about the preservation of the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery or the *defectus ordinis* present in Protestant and Anglican communities are completely solved. “Ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church” merely suggests that despite whatever defects in Eucharist and ministry may be present in such communities, it is *possible* (though not certain) that such communities nevertheless may be worthy of the designation “church” if they are living a fruitful and effective ecclesial life.

## 5. *Conclusion*

In Chapter Two I noted the thought experiments of both Catholic and non-Catholic theologians that demonstrate the tension that the Catholic Church’s traditional standard of “church” (based on the possession of the genuine and integral reality of the

eucharistic mystery) can create in particular concrete circumstances.<sup>46</sup> I suggested that these thought experiments illustrated that the true and proper reality of the church can indeed exist (although it does so in only in abnormal circumstances) apart from the normal institutional structures of the church, namely, the historic apostolic succession in the episcopate. Although such structures of the church are not merely external and disposable instruments, and are the normal means and signs which foster communion in the image of the triune God and fruitfully communicate and bring about the reality of God's salvation in the church; nevertheless, it is also true that a Christian community that has a defective celebration of the Eucharist (or a *defectus ordinis* in their ministry) may still existentially live out and experience the *res* of the church. As Kasper pointed out, criteria such as a valid episcopate and Eucharist are only the signs of life or signs of the ecclesial vitality of a Christian community, not life itself.<sup>47</sup> Although the institutional and sacramental structures of the church, such as its proclamations, sacraments and ministries, can never be dismissed as arbitrary or unessential to the normal constitution and life of the church, nevertheless these structures are not ends in themselves but fruits of as well as effective means and instruments in the service of the goal of the Christian

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter Two, 127-29. The thought experiments of Richard Gaillardetz and Miroslav Volf described above illustrate that the current standard of "church" based solely upon valid Eucharist and orders makes little intuitive sense in certain concrete situations of ecclesial life in which the *res* of the church is being lived by a Christian community with an invalid Eucharist in a more authentic manner than a comparable Catholic or Orthodox community.

<sup>47</sup> "If this is the right course to follow, *we can no longer accept the criteria of validity which were applied in the past to Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican orders as the only ones*. These can only serve now as signs to help us to recognize where and in what way the Spirit is active in the different churches. *They are signs of life, not life itself. We have also to take other signs into account and treat them as equally important*. Ultimately, what we have to do is to use spiritual judgment and to differentiate between spirits. The new situation requires us to study the whole question of office in the churches in the wider theological context of Christ, the Spirit and the Church." See Walter Kasper, "Convergence and Divergence in the Question of Office," in *The Plurality of Ministries*, Concilium 74, eds. Hans Küng and Walter Kasper (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972): 116. Emphasis mine.

life in and with God. Hence, other, more adequate criteria must be developed that use a wider and deeper theological context for judging whether Protestant and Anglican communities are authentic “churches.” Such criteria or signs are, as Kasper suggests, equally important for recognizing genuine ecclesiality.<sup>48</sup>

“Ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for church attempts to understand “church” in terms of the Spirit effectively realizing the mystery of God’s salvation given in Jesus Christ in a genuinely “ecclesial” way. While such a standard for recognizing “church” recognizes the necessity of a eucharistic celebration presided over by an ordained ministry, it also attempts to reinterpret what constitutes “valid” Eucharist and ministry in terms of the existential transformation it effects in the lives of those in the community. As I attempted to show above, the ultimate end for which both the sacrament of the Eucharist and sacramental orders are directed is the building up of the unity of the church through the ongoing transformation of those in the community such that they are led onward into the love of Christ, and through him onward into the love of the Trinity. Such a transformation of the community as a whole from lives of egoism to lives characterized by an unselfish love for God and neighbor deepens communion in and with Christ. This in turn organically builds up the unity within the church and as such serves as an effective sign to the world.<sup>49</sup> Any community whose eucharistic celebration produces such fruit, regardless of whether such a Eucharist is “ritually valid,” is “valid” in a basic and more fundamental sense. I suggest that if the Catholic Church can recognize in Protestant and Anglican eucharistic celebrations such fruitfulness, then such communities should be

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 346.

recognized as “churches” in the theological sense, even if they have not completely preserved the genuine and integral reality of the eucharistic mystery because of a *defectus ordinis* in their ministry.

In this chapter I have tried to develop a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” by drawing on the theologies of Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper. Both Ratzinger and Kasper have much to contribute to a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for “church.” Ratzinger’s strongest contribution is found no doubt in his description of the “fruitfulness” of the trinitarian God. But he also uses the language of “fruitfulness” when speaking of how the risen Christ has become “communicable” through his death and resurrection on the cross. Yet for all that Ratzinger has to contribute to a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness,” he never clearly connects “fruitfulness” with the church itself. For Ratzinger, “fruitfulness” would seem to be limited to his theology of the Trinity and to christology. Kasper, on the other hand, never explicitly applies the term “fruitfulness” to either the Trinity or to the paschal mystery (though his theology of God is a good complement to Ratzinger). Yet he adds to a theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” in describing the church as the fruit and effective means of salvation. He also makes unique contributions to “ecclesial fruitfulness” in talking about the fruitfulness of the Spirit and the effectiveness of God’s Word. Kasper’s pneumatological and soteriological understanding of the church is thus easier to incorporate into the theology of “ecclesial fruitfulness” presented above than is Ratzinger’s more christological understanding of the church as the body of Christ.

Finally, I would like to again repeat what I said in the introduction, that the argument this dissertation has made for “ecclesial fruitfulness” as a standard for recognizing Protestant and Anglican communities as “churches” in the theological sense is hardly incontrovertible. There will certainly be theologians who disagree with it. Nor is it likely that the current magisterium would endorse the standard of “church” proposed here. I also recognize that I have drawn conclusions from the theologies of Ratzinger and Kasper that neither individual would ultimately agree with. However, the goal of this dissertation is neither agreement with the current magisterium nor theological consistency with either Ratzinger or Kasper. Rather, this dissertation intentionally has employed a more exploratory and suggestive style, and is an attempt to seek a creative solution to a difficult ecumenical issue that has thus far proved elusive.

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